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WINTER 2004

volume 24 number 1
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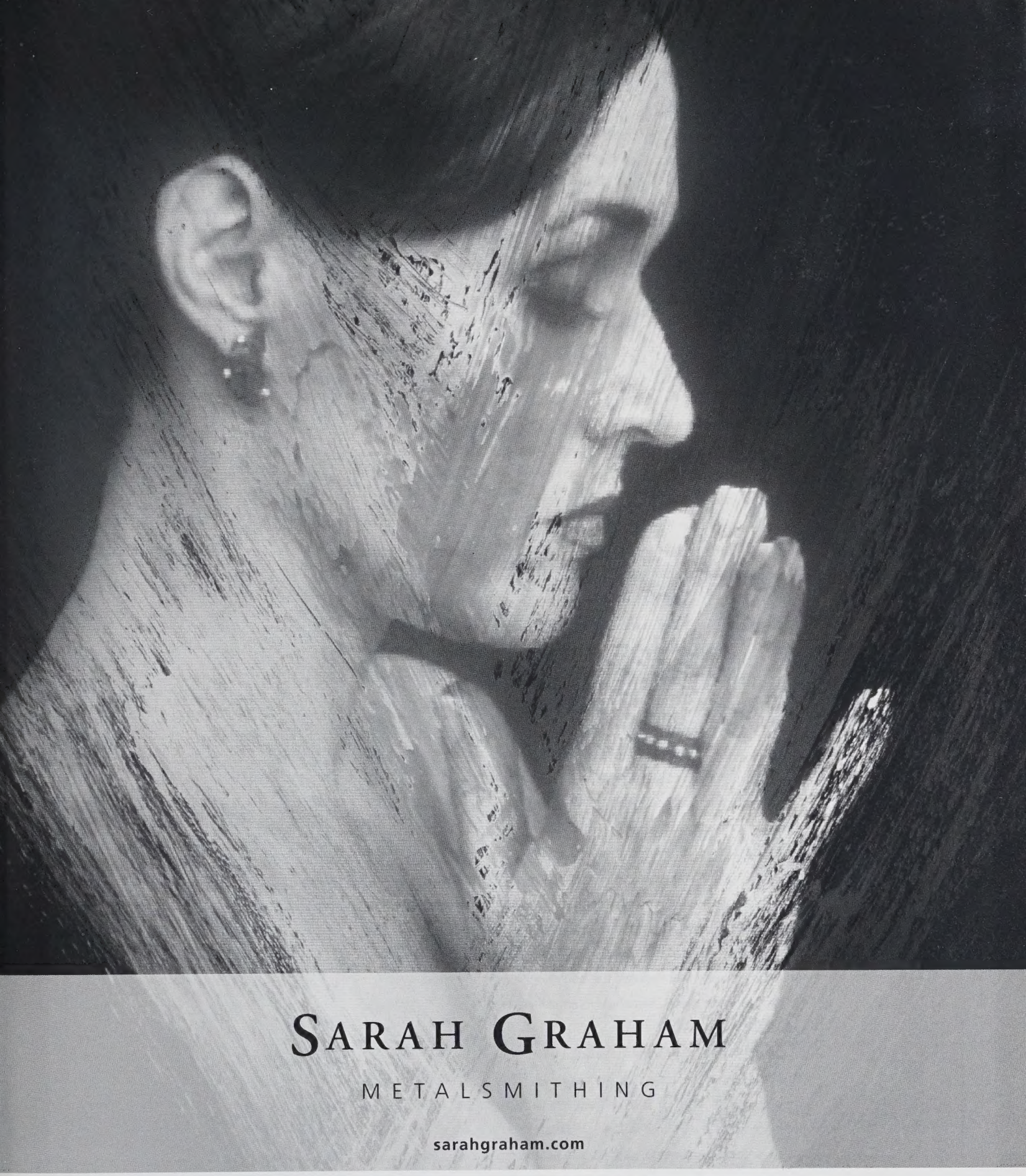
counterclockwise from top
Keith Lewis
Tool (necklace), 2000 (detail)
sterling silver, copper, 18k gold, pen on paper
diameter 18"
Photo: Keith Lewis

Marjorie Schick
Progression (Suite of Necklaces), begun in 2002 and ongoing (detail)
painted paper on wood
each: 14 1/2 x 14 1/2 x 1/4"

Upton Presentation Sword, (detail)
ca. 1860
steel, enamel

cover
Marjorie Schick
Cocoon for Spiral Necklace, 2003
cocoon: painted papier-mâché over steel with wire mesh, wood, and linen thread;
31 x 24 1/2 x 21"
necklace: painted papier-mâché over mesh, steel, and cardboard with linen thread
26 x 14 1/4 x 4"
Photo: Gary Pollmiller



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Manzanita Earrings and Wide Pebble Bold Ring – Blackened Steel, White Gold and White Diamonds Photo – William Dobbs

FROM THE EDITOR

SUZANNE RAMLJAK

Despite the fact that we are grounded in our bodies, we have developed the uncanny ability to forget our corporeal selves. The very vehicle of our lived experience tends to disappear from beneath us. In his book, *The Absent Body*, Drew Leder explores the ways in which our bodies continually recede from conscious experience as our attention drifts. "While in one sense the body is the most abiding and inescapable presence in our lives," writes Leder, "one's own body is rarely the thematic object of experience."

This is where jewelry comes in. Jewelry foregrounds the body, bringing it back into high relief. While all jewelry engages bodily consciousness to some degree, certain jewelers make more insistent demands on the flesh. Marjorie Schick (on our cover) is one such jeweler; her works catalyze our physical self-awareness. As Tacey Rosolowski observes, "the sensuous qualities of [Schick's pieces] root the viewer's perception in the here and now, where presence emerges from relational understanding." Schick's compelling forms set up a dynamic rapport by which we come to "know ourselves by catching ourselves in the act of knowing objects."

Similarly, the work of Keith Lewis, featured in this issue, rivets attention on our incarnate being. The human body is both message and messenger in his work, which conveys an emancipatory vision of human sexuality. "I believe in sex with an evangelical zeal," asserts Lewis. "Sex can grant us awareness and knowledge about the self and others and the suppression or redirection of our sexual needs ... is a primary means of control in our culture." To counter such control and suppression, Lewis produces jewelry that exposes the body's sexual organs and appetites, forcing us to be more conscious, even self-conscious, about our basic carnal desires.

A self-proclaimed activist, Lewis enlists jewelry as a means of challenging cultural restraints. Although less strident, Marjorie Schick's program could also be deemed activist in that she seeks to arouse wearers and viewers into a state of heightened consciousness. Both artists produce ornamental gadflies that help us fulfill the ancient dictum inscribed on the Temple of Delphi: "Know Thyself."

SR

METALSMITH

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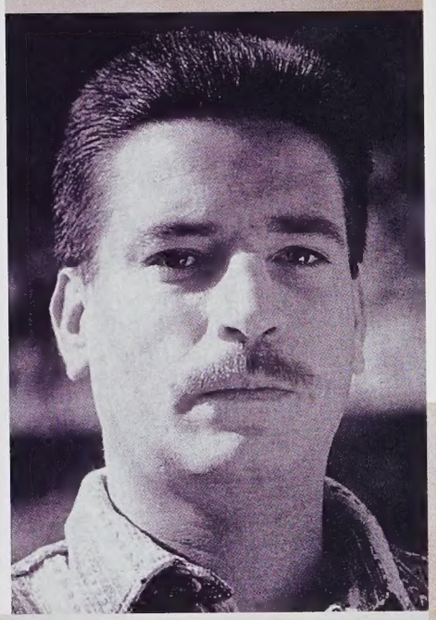

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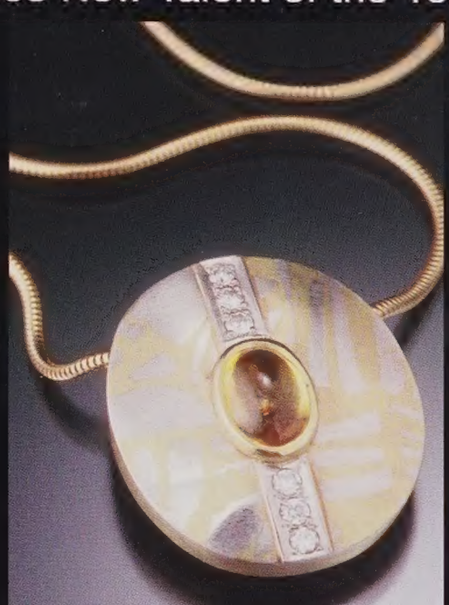

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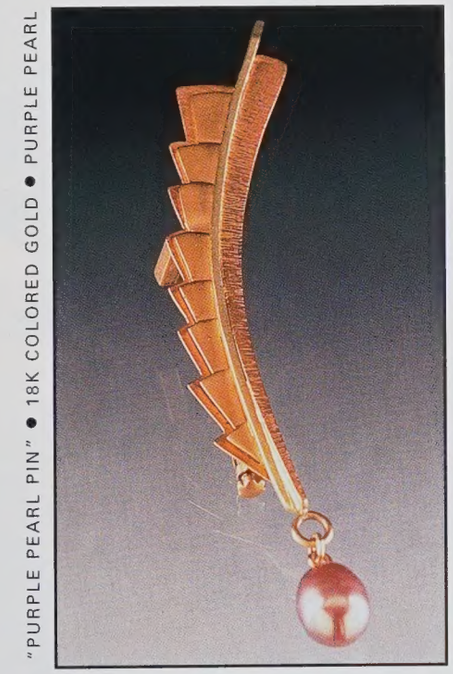

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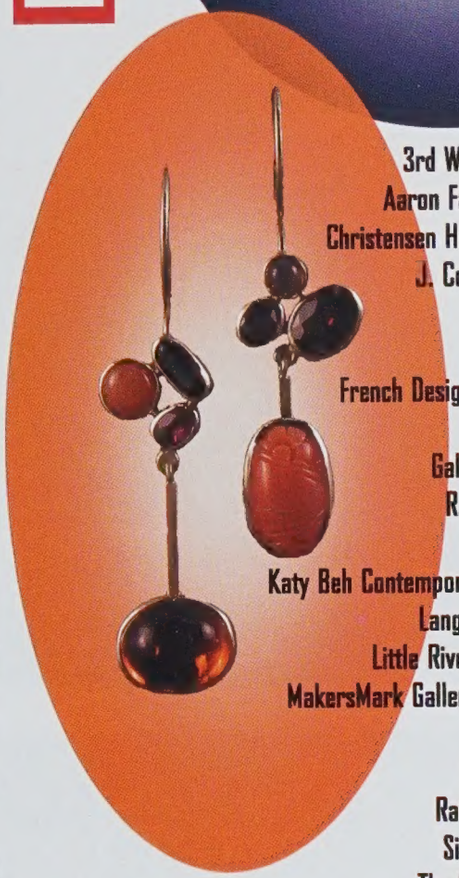

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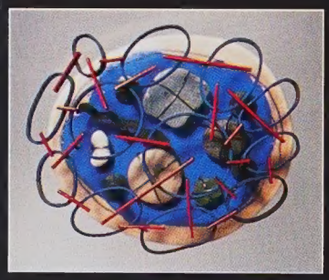

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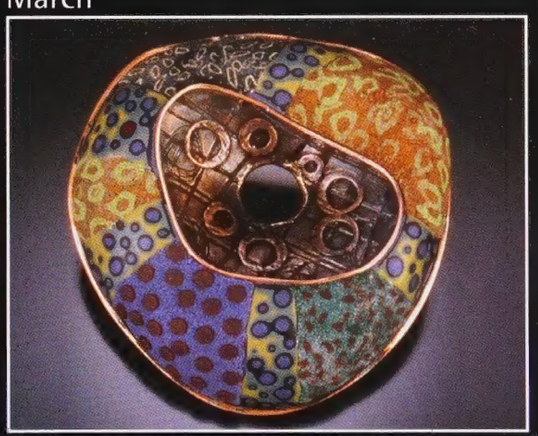

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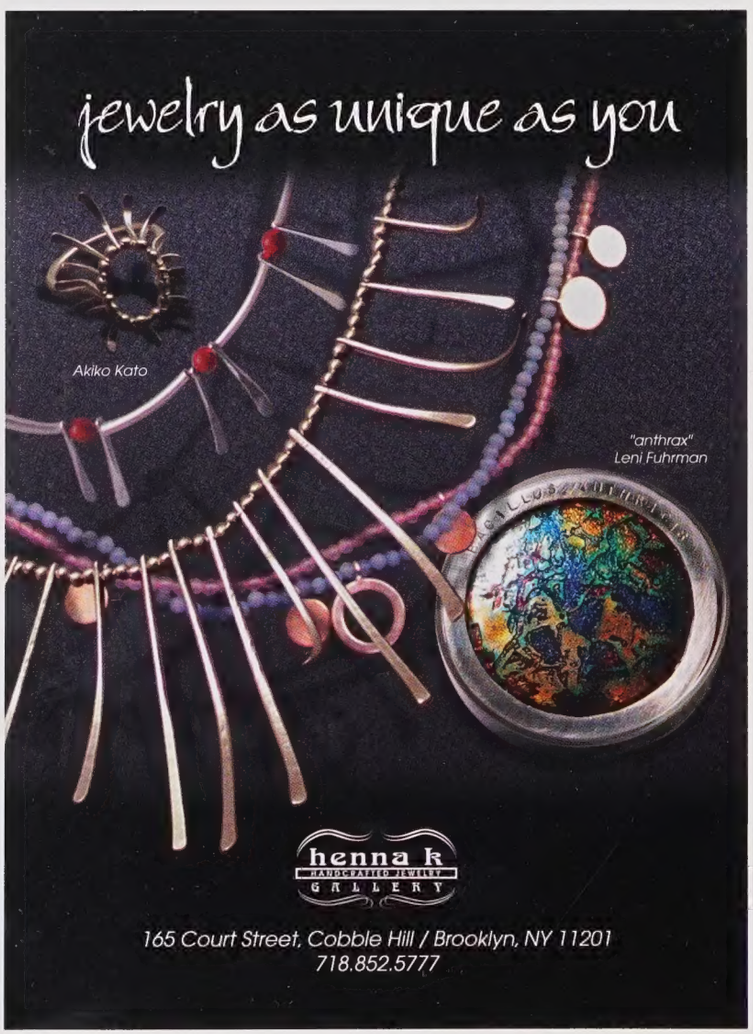

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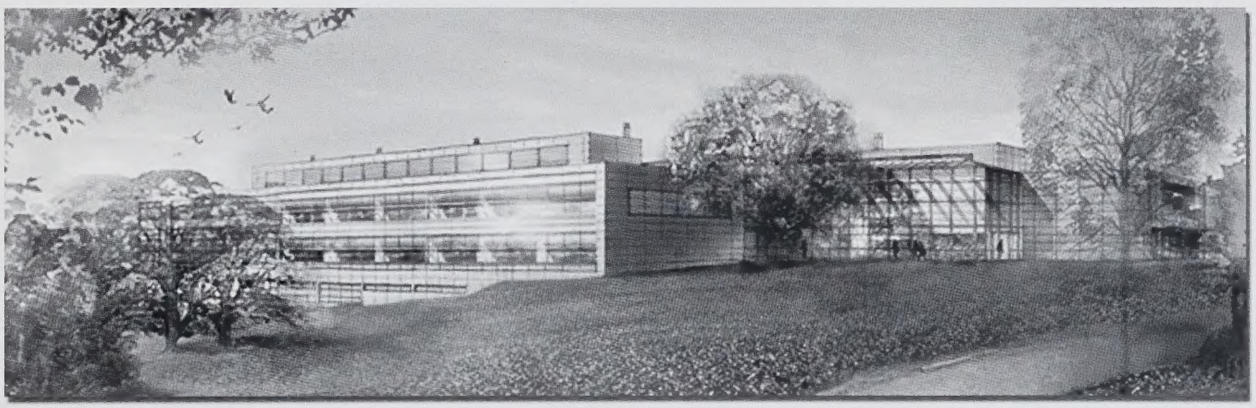
The site for the state of the art 150,000 sq. ft laboratory is in Ipswich, Massachusetts, approximately 35 miles north of Boston. Construction of the building is underway and expected to be completed in early 2005. The commission to create the new artwork will be awarded by mid 2004, and all work should be completed by mid 2005.

New England Biolabs is a world leader in the production of enzymes for molecular biology applications. The company has a 20 year history of supporting science, environmental initiatives, and artistic endeavors worldwide.

Details of the competition, including architectural notes and images, will be posted on the NEB web site at **www.neb.com/adc.**



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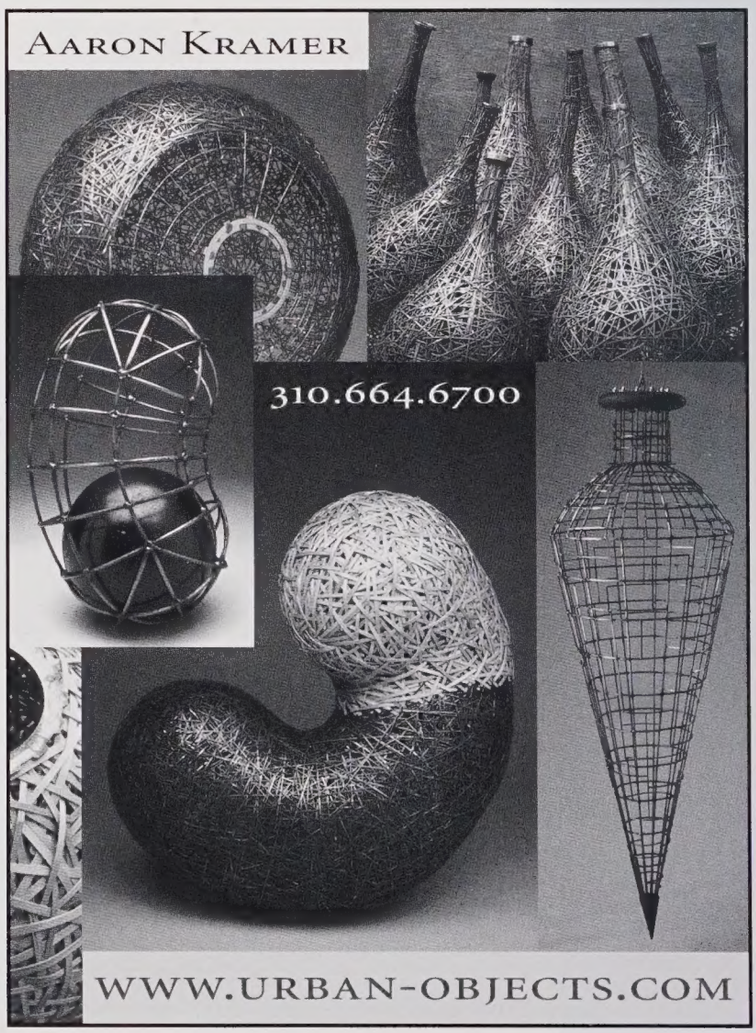

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- **Robert Ebendorf:** Passed + Present, Then + Now
- **Objects of Desire:** Florida Society of Goldsmiths
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- **Heavy Metals:** Three Centuries of Silver and Gold
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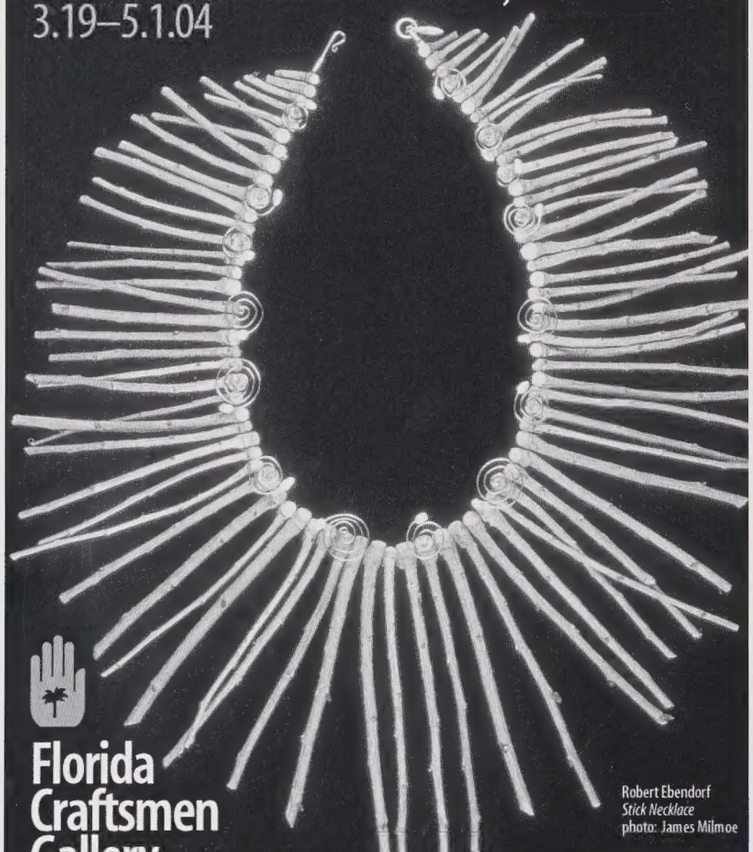

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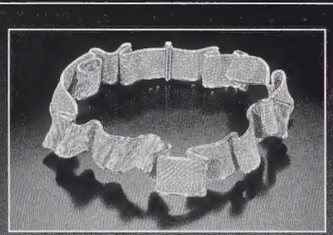

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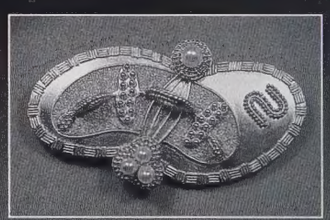

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by Susan Myers

Installation View, "Display Use Only," Kirkland Art Center, Kirkland, WA, 2002, curated by Susan Myers

Fortunately, change is inevitable. Even for those individuals in the art establishment who assert that artists cannot and should not be active as curators or critics. This assertion is part of a traditional art world—one built on a foundation of hierarchies and exclusions that erode any modicum of power, control, influence, and authority that an individual artist has on or within the system. When artists actively participate as curators, critics, or arts administrators, this foundation starts to crumble. While I do not advocate adopting the "out with the old, in with the new" slogan completely, I believe that anyone involved with art cannot remain contemporary without identifying and acknowledging new models, approaches, and tendencies with regard to curatorial practice and art criticism. Contemporary artists have recognized and are embracing these new approaches, and are taking charge as curators, critics, and administrators—shifting the division of power in the art world.

Of course, artists have been consciously redefining the art world since the organization of the famous 1863 Salon des Refusés. Following this event, many artists continued to question and challenge the confines of the art establishment, not just as artists, but as curators, exhibition organizers, gallery owners, arts administrators, editors, publishers, and writers. Josef Albers, Ad Reinhardt, Frank Stella, Donald Judd, and Robert Smithson have all written about art and are well respected for their achievements. Artist David Hockney is currently shaking up the art world with his book, *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters*. Hockney is attempting to rewrite the history of modern painting by theorizing that artists like Velázquez, Van Eyck, and Caravaggio used optics and lenses to aid in the creation of their masterpieces. In craft, several artists have contributed to the written discourse surrounding the field including: William Morris, Rob Barnard, Margie Hughto, Bernard Leach, and Bruce Metcalf, among others.

The current notion of the artist as curator emerged during the late 1960s and early 1970s in New York with the birth of what we commonly refer to today as "alternative spaces." The development of alternative spaces like White Columns and Franklin Furnace was initiated by artists who were striving for a new method of

presenting their work—a method that ensured the artist's authority and control. These first spaces were instrumental in serving artists who had been overlooked by curators and critics and underrepresented in the institutional art world, such as women artists and artists with ethnically diverse backgrounds. Alternative spaces were also among the first to support artists working in an interdisciplinary manner to create art. Contemporary alternative spaces still function in this capacity by providing artists with the physical space and resources to exhibit their own artwork, as well as the means to curate and organize exhibitions of fellow artists. These opportunities give artists a voice in dictating and defining what is relevant in the art world. What once was a radical new model is now a mainstay.

The art establishment has been and will always be the focus of reform and critique. Today, even formally trained art professionals are recognizing the constraints and limitations of the traditional art world. A new breed has emerged, and many professionals are leaving or opting out of institutional service. Adopting the distinguished title of "independent curator," they are attempting to reconfigure and reform their practice. Contemporary artists like Fred Wilson are also involved in this current wave of reform. Wilson uses the methodology of curatorial practice and art criticism to critique and examine the many divisions of power in the art world.

With this history and the overall success of artists implementing change, one might ask why there is still resistance from the art establishment toward artists occupying positions of influence outside of their studio practice. Much of the debate over artists serving as curators and critics comes from academically trained professionals who tend to believe that the majority of artists do not possess the capabilities to perform outside the studio environment. This attitude plays into the stereotypical view of the artist as inarticulate, unorganized, and uneducated with respect to the history of art. The art world has successfully perpetuated the belief that formally trained critics and curators are needed to provide artists with the concepts and vocabulary required to discuss their work.[1] This assumption is terribly antiquated and tiresome. As Christopher Knight points out in his *Los Angeles Times* article "Art for School's Sake," the majority of practicing artists are products of the modern university system.[2] While this system is responsible for instituting and sanctioning art criticism as an academic discipline, it has at the same time also educated a generation of "smart" artists, who are very articulate and have the ability to discuss the influences, ideas, concepts, and theories that inform their own work in particular and art practice in general.

Some in the art world would argue that artists active as curators and critics lack the ability to remain objective and avoid possible conflicts of interest. But professional curators and critics are just as likely as artists to bring their own agendas and limited interests to a curatorial project or critical review. And to a certain extent, don't we expect them to contribute their point of view? Ultimately, we should encourage a diversity of viewpoints including those of artists. As for potential conflicts of interest, it is ridiculous to assume that artists are the only players preoccupied with mutual recognition—curators and critics are just as guilty of this practice. These professionals use the same networking strategies and structures as artists, and like artists, recognize and promote their friends and colleagues. I am not sure I believe there even is an "independent art world," since everyone is dependent on someone in this field. And, artists are just as qualified, capable, and well-positioned as any academically trained art professional to record the activities of fellow artists and help define the history of art.

I personally made the decision to start writing and curating because I wanted to stay involved in the art world outside of my studio practice. With the metalsmithing field divided into two distinct groups—those situated within an academic environment and those practicing in the marketplace—artists like myself who choose to operate outside of these contexts are often isolated, lacking the sense of community and connection to the field that these groups can provide. Actively participating on many different levels within the art world has proved overwhelmingly beneficial to my development as an artist. The more I am involved in critiquing, questioning, and examining the work of others, the more informed my own artwork becomes. Writing and curating stimulate my thought processes and are another way in which I can express and explore my ideas. In addition to these activities, I have established a career in arts administration, which allows me to contribute an artist's perspective to the decision-making process while also promoting artists' needs and concerns.

I view all of these involvements as interdependent practices integral to my life as an artist. As a young artist, I am eager to have my voice heard and to help shape the future of craft and maybe even my small corner of the art world. That may sound ambitious but I think it is possible—because the reality of change is unfailing. ⧗

Susan Myers is a visual artist and metalsmith, as well as a writer, arts administrator, occasional curator, former teacher, and new resident of Philadelphia.

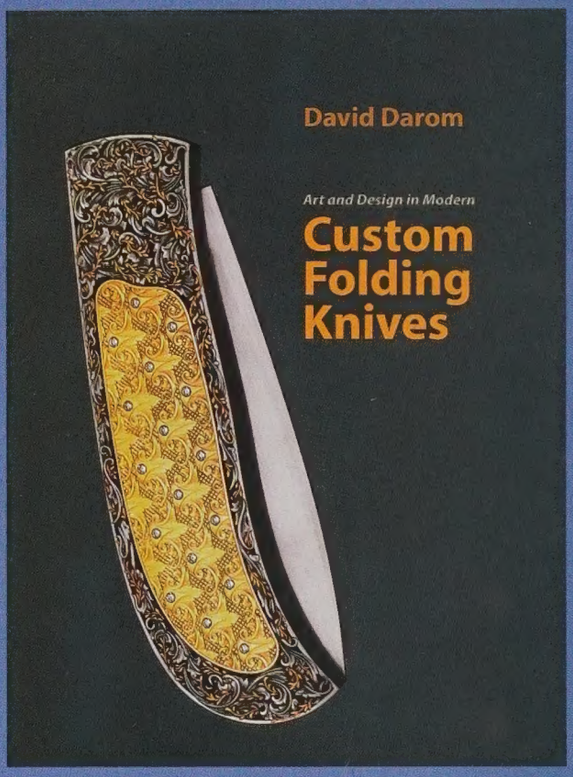
1 Janet Koplos, "What's Crafts Criticism Anyway?" in *Exploring Contemporary Craft: History, Theory & Critical Writing* (Coach House Books and Harbourfront Centre, 2002), 84.
2 Christopher Knight, "Art for School's Sake." *The Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 2001.

BOOKS

Art and Design in Modern Custom Folding Knives
by David Darom

Distributed by Tipografia Edizioni Saviolo, Vercelli, Italy, 2003

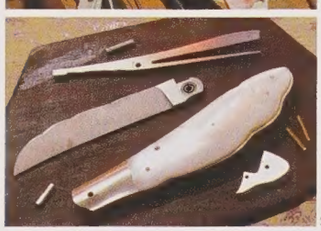
by Tim McCreight



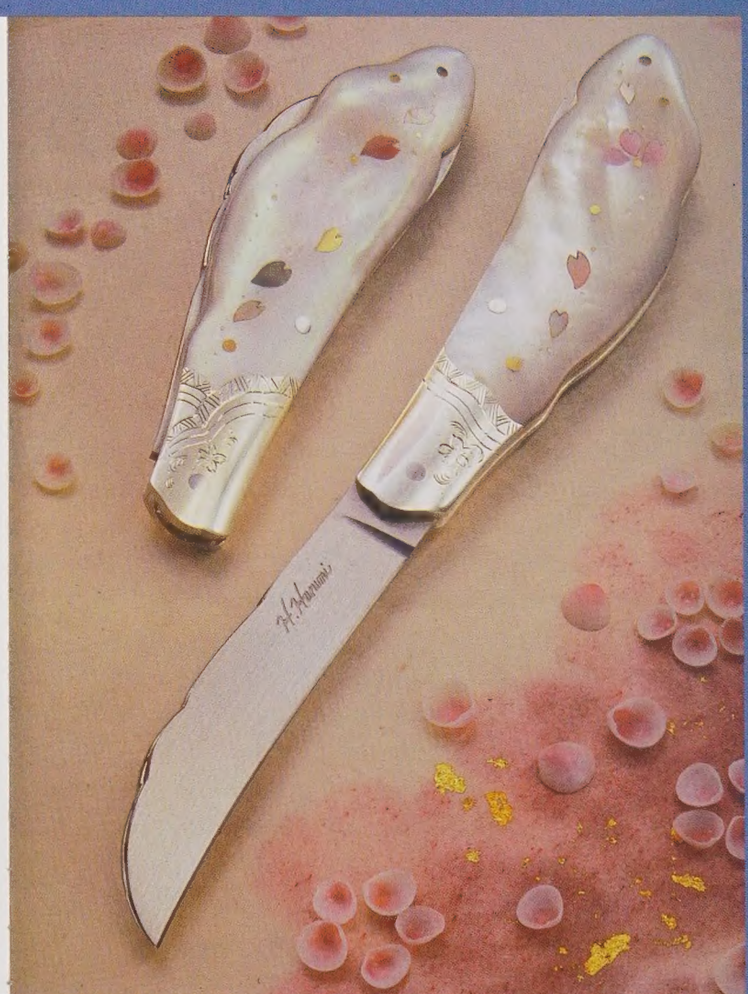
This book is not only very good, it is important. In the introduction, author David Darom, who is a marine biologist, photographer and collector of knives, describes becoming aware of a gap between the exquisite work he saw in shows and a general perception of folding knives primarily as practical tools. As a successful author of 20 books on a wide range of subjects, Darom took what was for him a logical route to close this gap; he made a showcase book to exhibit what he calls a Hall of Fame of leading knifemakers.

The author's sense of mission permeates the book, and it bubbles with the energy of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable collector eager to share his discoveries. Darom features 22 artists, in each case showing the construction of a particular knife and offering a gallery of other pieces and a personal statement by the artist. This first tier of designers is augmented with nine additional knifemakers, each presenting a short biography and abbreviated gallery.

1 Harumi's work bench with raw materials, tools, and drawings. The shell slab is cut out of a whole shell. Shells are remnants of life not just raw materials for a knife.
2 The basic knife in pieces. 440C hand filed blade. 18k gold pins, silver bolsters and Mother of Pearl scales which look like the sky.
3 Cutting out the cherry petals with a jeweller's saw from a pink pearl slab. Later to be finished off with needle files.
4 Preparing the holes with an electric drill and various carving knives to later have the petals inlayed.
5 Engraving the bolsters to look like the hem of a kimono.



Opposite:
WIND
A blast of wind.
Where are the cherry petals flying?
Far beyond the hazy spring sky?
Or... maybe to your heart?
It will grow into a big swirling mass and blow to you someday.
The folder "WIND," made in 2002, is the first of a series. Length 5 2/3" (140 mm).
"Various things will come on various winds and be blown on to you".



138 Harumi Hirayama

From the top:
"Windows", 2001
Liner lock folder made for the 2001 Art knife Invitational Show in San Diego. The blade is just under 4" (100 mm) long. Composed of eight separate panels of Mosaic Damascus, each made of dozens of sections of one inch square steel tubing, nickel powder and round high-carbon rods. The rods were forge-welded, then forged into smaller and smaller bars, and then cut up and stacked together many times to form the desired pattern. These panels were then assembled into the final blade over a separated core material that appears on the cutting edge. Imagine placing several slices of bread on both sides of one long flat piece of meat and pressing that sandwich into a solid mass. Steve did just that, only using very elaborate Mosaic Damascus steel.
"Virus", 1999
This is the original "Virus" knife. It was made for a friend of the artist who requested an "Organic" theme. Steve began looking at images of microscopic blood structures for the handle and at virus shapes for the blade. The final Mosaic Damascus was as close as he could get using materials found in his shop. The color is heat patination. Overall length 5 4/5" (145 mm).
"Turtle Pattern" folder, 2000
The handle is made from the same base material as the "Windows" folder. The material shown is a piece of the "Windows" material before it was totally reduced for the "Windows" pattern knife. It has the appearance of the segment of a turtle's shell, hence the name. The color is a result of planned heat oxidation. Steve pioneered the use of this technique and the results are quite striking. The blade is 2 1/2" (62 mm) long and is one of several Steve made for the "Virus" series knives. It is composed of many compound Mosaic patterns and powder metal elements.

Opposite:
Persian fighters, 2000-2001
This is a series of latch-release folders made in a similar style using different Damascus patterns and handle material. All with 4" (100 mm) blades and carved latch releases. Knife on the left has a brown fossil Walrus handle and the blade and bolsters are of "Palm Leaf" or "Feather" pattern Damascus. The center knife exhibits a "Jelly Roll" Damascus pattern on the blade and "Vortex" Damascus bolsters. The handle is carved Gold-Lip Pearl. The bottom knife is a "Chevron" pattern, one of the most difficult patterns to make properly. It is a combination of carbon steel and pattern-welded chevrons, butt welded into a solid bar. The blade is then made from that bar. This technique was used by Mogul bladesmiths to exhibit their forging skill. Steve was the first modern bladesmith to use this method in folding knives. The enlarged view shows a close-up of this Damascus as well as the "Virus" pattern on the bolsters. The square 'sections' of the bolster started as sections of six inch pipe filled with round Damascus elements. As one can see, there are about ten of these elements involved in developing the pattern in this one inch by one and a half inch piece of Damascus steel.

206 Steve Schwarzer

The fine collection of contemporary work is preceded by seven essays that set the stage for the examples that follow, covering topics as diverse as the art of collecting and technical notes on engraving, anodizing, and scrimshaw. Of particular value is the description of Mosaic Damascus by Steve Schwarzer. This relatively new process combines the tradition of canemaking used to create millefiori glass with high technology powdered steel metallurgy to create complex patterns in decorative forge-welded steel.

The book is lushly illustrated—altogether there are nearly 300 photographs of knives and the techniques used to create them. Acknowledging the familiar dilemma of how to show several views of a three-dimensional object (like both sides of a knife), Darom has used computer manipulation to create hybrid photographs that seamlessly blend several views of a single knife into one image. What appears at first glance to be a photograph of several similar knives lying side by side, turns out to be an image depicting the opened, closed, and detailed views of one knife. Although initially unsettling, the benefits of this surreal presentation are hard to deny, since seeing an entire knife and a close detail simultaneously is thrilling.

All this makes *Custom Folding Knives* a good book, but what makes it important? Handmade knives and the artists who make them have long labored under a Good Ole Boy stereotype that binds them to gun shows, paramilitary catalogs, and hobbycraft technology. This book does not argue against these bridling limitations—it shatters them completely. From elegant engravings to Mardi Gras colors, to intricate Mosaic Damascus figures, these knives astound us. Who could have guessed that in studios around the world, talented men and women are making folding knives whose vitality, craftsmanship, and artistry are on a par with our finest jewelry and watchmaking? Well, David Darom knew, and lucky for us, he did something about it. ⧗

Tim McCreight, a professor of metalsmithing and jewelry at Maine College of Art in Portland, is the author of 11 books on metalwork, and president of Brynmorgen Press.

Gary Noffke

by LeeAnn Mitchell

Remote by design, the home and studio of Gary Noffke do indeed take you to that "other place." Once you have cleared the formidable driveway, you are on a rise that resonates with the echoes of the active creek below. The smell of fresh ginger in the garden, combined with the cool provided by the numerous shade trees of all varieties, almost makes you believe you are not in Georgia. This is what Noffke calls home, but it is actually more of a fortress.

A native of Sullivan, Illinois, Noffke moved to the Athens, Georgia, area in 1971 to take a faculty position in the metals department at the University of Georgia. The house and studio were constructed in 1973 and based on designs by architect James Mitchell. Construction was executed by Noffke and a host of friends, and took approximately one year. The wood cantilevered A-frame, with its large and peaceful deck overlooking the water, has stood the test of time, although Noffke has invented the new and dangerous sport of swatting wood eating bees with a tennis racket. The house and the studio are physically connected, just as the work of Gary Noffke is connected to the very essence of his life.

Noffke at work in his studio, 2003
Photo: LeeAnn Mitchell

Noffke's studio exterior, 2003
Photo: LeeAnn Mitchell

Noffke's professional achievements are numerous, with work in major museum collections. He remains the metalsmith's metalsmith. However, he also remains the predominate collector of his pieces, a loss for the world of contemporary metalsmithing. What makes Noffke's work so crucial to this field? One of the many answers would be his innovation with alloys. Never satisfied with the properties of sterling silver, Noffke was awarded a faculty research grant in the early 1970s from the University of Georgia to explore cold forging fine silver from sheet. During that period, he did a lot of hot forging with copper for student demonstrations, and began to think more intensely about silver. Surely if copper could be hot forged so readily, silver should have the same potential. In 1983, Noffke began experimenting with hot forging of sterling, but the short heat range of sterling again proved

unsatisfactory, so the next year he began hot forging fine silver and producing spoons and small vessels. Finally in the early 1990s, it hit him, what if he made his own alloy that would be more suitable for hot forging? By eliminating some of the copper content in the sterling silver he began to cast his own billets of 969 silver and the rest is history. The new alloy provided him with the perfect metal to achieve the hollowware forms of the scale he had long sought. His current focus is now hot forging gold and he is one of the very few people in the United States, if not the world, hot forging gold from cast billets.

It is important to note that this innovation occurred while Noffke was devoting his academic career to developing the metals program at the University of Georgia and producing an outstanding group of students who have remained active in the field. He is always eager to share his knowledge of metals, as evident by his extensive record of visiting artist invitations at both universities and craft schools.

Noffke's studio is a comfortable space for one and outfitted with the tools he needs. His Peddinghaus anvil, replete with a roll of duct tape to muffle the sounds of hammering, two stumps for his rounded stakes, a tumbler, pickling bath, a desk for finishing, and a highly decorated antique refrigerator, suit his needs and have allowed him to produce an amazingly large body of work.

Besides being an internationally known metalsmith, Noffke is also an amateur mycologist, an avid hunter, fisherman, organic gardener, and excellent cook. While he will happily share his innovations with alloys, he will never give up his secret morel hunting spot or his favorite deer hunting locations. He will exhaust all resources to help those close to him and the thing that motivates him the most is making work for the people he cares about. This also includes the needs of his pets. His dog Sister enjoys water from an elegantly forged silver bowl, while Ruby the cat, enjoys a gold bowl. His series of gold birthday cups for his daughter Sydney stand apart as some of his finest pieces to date, and are physical manifestations of his great love for her.

Legends about Noffke are numerous—he has a reputation for being cantankerous. The dating and occasional misdating of his work is evidence of this attitude. "I always felt like the art historians had little interest or knowledge of contemporary metalsmithing and all they had were the dates, and I am taking that away from them." Sometimes he claims he is not sure of the correct dates, but that could be an exacted ploy and a part of his trickster personality.

Noffke continues to pursue his love of hot forging non-ferrous metals in many different venues. He has executed several private commissions since his retirement from the University of Georgia in 2001, and is currently exploring other ways to expose his work to a larger audience through public commissions. Ultimately, Gary Noffke is the real deal. An artist on all levels, his command of the craft has changed not only his work, but the field of metalsmithing. ⧗

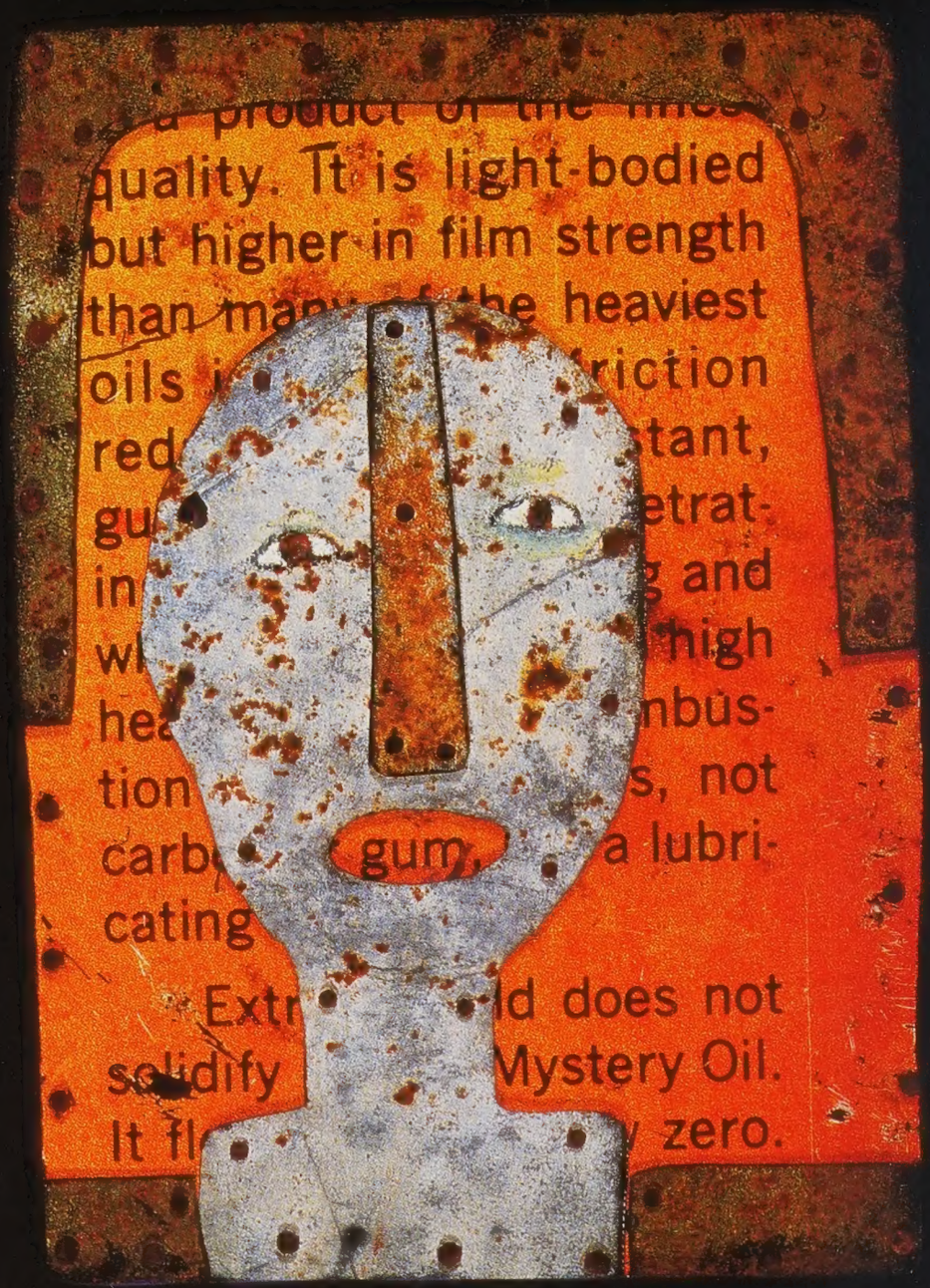
Cup, Two Vases and Tea Pot, 1998
forged and raised 969 silver alloy, 18k gold overly, boxwood handle
Photo: Robert Lowery

LeeAnn Mitchell is a sculptor in Farmington, Georgia, and serves as the central office administrator for the Artist Blacksmith's Association of North America, Inc.

OBSERVATIONS

The Work of Judith Hoyt

by Marjorie Simon



For more than 20 years Judith Hoyt has parsed the human figure in metal and mixed media. Beginning with a salvaged scrap of metal, wood, a book, or other material with a history, she fashions solitary or paired figures, often with a surprised or pensive mien. She is a metallist to the extent that fabricated metal forms provide a ghostly surface on which opaque paint is sparingly applied. The scale is intimate, even in the large wall pieces. Tightly clustered on the studio wall their dialogue buzzes with the silent hum of human voices. To share space with them is to hear their cacophony of silence.

Although academically trained with a BFA in Printmaking from SUNY New Paltz, Hoyt remains outside the "academy" in her worldview. Working intuitively, she identifies with visionary or so-called Outsider artists and seems to embody Ken Johnson's commentary on California assemblage artist George Herms: "[T]he central event around which each work revolve[s] is the quasi-magical transformation of waste into art....The redemption of refuse through art may be read as a metaphor for accepting unlovely aspects of the self...."[1] Hoyt's work retains a craftsman's "hand" and a refined intimacy often missing from conventional assemblage. Like sculptors Alison Saar and the early Ellen Driscoll, Hoyt fastens metal directly onto a wooden substructure with tiny brads or metal rivets. Her recent jewelry is now as fully realized as her earlier wall mounted works. She exclusively makes brooches, so the body becomes both the backdrop and the partner—the figure carries the figure, like the image born on the torso of *Other Self*. They're like sketches or figure studies, not in the least perfunctory, but more like a snapshot than a studio portrait.

The human face has never been more expressive than in these archetypal forms with their somber mouths and prominent noses. They're never cute or generic, frequently uncertain, always deeply human. The colors, too, are silenced, "lifeless colors, the color of ashes, [which] are used in religious habits to signify mortification, mourning, and humility."[2] Some are toothless ghosts of indeterminate gender. Elongated necks raise heads above non-existent bodies; squat necks disappear into hunched shoulders. Deformed but never repellent, these solitary creatures invite our empathy for the times when we too feel bewildered, unattractive, or alone. And though Hoyt has been working with the figures for decades they seem perfectly suited to a post-9/11 world.

Hoyt has succeeded in resolving the fundamental contradiction for women artists dealing with the figure—that of being both object and maker. *Figure with Red Face* and *Woman with Blue Green Hat* recall her series "Women in Housedresses" of a decade ago. Even the smallest brooch is imbued with authenticity and sympathy. Female bodies are never objectified. They live in an America without cable TV or cosmetic surgery. Some figures appear genderless, rather like the way our youth-oriented society has unsexed the aged. Since they have no hair, they have no sexuality either, no power, no vital force. The absence of gender identity leaves us free to concentrate on the unifying and human emotions of isolation, abandonment, contemplation, confusion.

As a woman artist, Judith Hoyt has created women who are neither menacing nor nurturing, not sexually alluring, but merely solitary. She frequently chooses to represent androgyny, thus avoiding identifying traditional postures of masculinity or femininity. Indeed, she has succeeded in "exposing the instability of gender itself as a continually shifting, fundamentally unstable scaffolding of socially articulated roles and visually and psychically determined identities."[3] She neither supports nor subverts the existing social order, but seems to inhabit some timeless place outside mainstream society, looking, instead, deeply inward. ⧗

Marjorie Simon is a metalsmith and writer based in New Jersey.

[1] Ken Johnson, "Love and Rubbish," *Art in America*, April 1993, 115.
[2] Gertrude Grace Sill, *A Handbook of Symbols in Christian Art* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 29.
[3] Amelia Jones, writing about Marcel Duchamp, in Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon, *The Body Imaged* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 31.

clockwise from lower left, opposite page
Woman with Blue Green Hat, 2003
mixed media
36 x 11 x 3/4"

Mystery Oil (brooch), 2002
found metals, copper
3 5/8 x 2 5/8"

Three Straps (brooch), 2003
found metal, copper
5 1/4 x 2"

Other Self, 2001
mixed media
23 1/2 x 12 x 1 1/4"

Figure with Red Face, 2001
mixed media
25 1/2 x 6 x 3/4"

Shadowed by the Light of a Full Moon, A Scoop for Moonbeams, 2002
scoop: painted papier-mâché over wood and cardboard; 16 1/8 x 6 x 3"
shadow: stitched and painted fiberglass screen, aluminum wire and thread
16 1/8 x 7 1/4 x 2 3/8"

Marjorie Schick

Objects of Self-Consciousness

by Tacey A. Rosolowski

The body is already a work of art. The intensification of awareness of all sorts—and of the self—transforms it into something else.

– Marjorie Schick

If you were to argue that you never notice yourself knowing, I would say, pay closer attention and you will. – Antonio Damasio

Head Sculpture (Blue Eyes), 1969
brass with blue Plexiglas
36 1/4 x 17 1/4 x 16"

In 1969, Marjorie Schick began work on a brass necklace. She had established her artistic path a few years earlier, when she read an article about David Smith and wondered how it would feel to put her hand or head through an opening in one of his sculptures. Looking at her own metal piece, she recalls, "It was so dull. Worse still, it just lay around my neck and on my desk. I thought, 'What if I could look through my necklace?' So I built tubes that held lenses in front of my eyes."[1] Using brass wire (in a constructivist style reminiscent of Smith's), Schick created *Head Sculpture*, a line-into-volume form that encloses the wearer—along with the blue-lensed sunglasses that inspired Schick's nickname for the piece, "Blue Eyes."

Head Sculpture exemplifies why Marjorie Schick has been an international influence in jewelry for the past 30 years. "I've stayed amazingly focused on creating sculptural forms to wear," Schick says. "One of my goals has been to make jewelry a fine art form." Intuitive, process-oriented, and often motivated by humor, however, she has avoided the overly conceptual focus of much contemporary art. Only in a provisional sense can her category-exploding forms be called abstract. A flash of imagination and Schick associates the human neck with the wall hooks used to hang Shaker chairs. The result is *Yellow Ladderback Chair* (2001), a painted canvas sculpture to hang on the wearer and toy with the experience of being "in a chair." *Tool Belt and Scarf for Sonia Delaunay* (2003) sets paintbrushes and paint pans, a needle, thread, and scissors (all made of wood) dancing around the wearer's knees. Schick constructed the belt of dowels and the scarf of wood blocks, painting each with a different pattern taken from Delaunay's paintings and fabric designs; they envelop the wearer in Delaunay's Futurist motifs.

Of course, they also surround the wearer with Schick's vision, one founded in the (more commonly European) strategy of using the body to complete the jewelry ornament. Schick exploits the ritual or ceremonial quality of the ornament-human symbiosis. Victor Turner characterizes ritual symbols as "a set of evocative devices for rousing, channeling and domesticating powerful emotions."[2] Schick's pieces elicit responses as varied as glee, disorientation, or amazement. *Ladderback Chair* settles against skin, and the body becomes a place to disrupt normal categories of objects; the *Tool Belt and Scarf* provide new kinaesthetic experiences for familiar objects or conjures them for things we might never touch.

If we come away from such objects believing that something profound has happened, we are correct—even if we cannot quite put the feeling into words. Despite dramatic size and riots of color, Schick's work exerts subtle effects. Operating at the border of language, her objects transform us by transforming our awareness. They engage our "dense mind," to use molecular biologist Candace Pert's term for the body. It is testimony to the import of Schick's work that we can step effortlessly into the vocabulary of contemporary neuroscience to elucidate such moments of hyper-perception. By invoking some of neuroscience's findings we shall see the implications Schick's work has for understanding the complex physicality of ornament and all art objects.

An obvious example is the series "Progression," whose vivid colors seize the eye. This installation is both finished and never-to-be-finished, and is Schick's first experiment with autobiographical reference: the 30 necklaces represent the first half of her life. The metallic paint in *Necklaces #17* and *#21* mark the years when Schick met and married her husband, Jim. Additions of black, white, and gray reflect the ensuing complexity of family relationships and blot out all color in *Necklace* #29, Schick's age when the couple's son was born. For her, the transformation symbolizes "both an end and a new beginning." "Progression's" symbolic neckpieces can be worn, but carry their greatest significance in

It is testimony to the import of Schick's work that we can step effortlessly into the vocabulary of contemporary neuroscience to elucidate such moments of hyper-perception.

In Henri's Garden (Wall Relief with Two Necklaces), 2003
wall relief: painted wood and painted paper on wood; 27 3/4 x 27 1/2 x 9 1/4"
flower petal necklace: painted wood, canvas, plastic laminate and bronze rods; 31 x 30 x 5/8"
seed pod necklace: painted wood and plastic laminate; 15 x 15 x 2 7/8"

Yellow Ladderback Chair
(Body Sculpture), 2001
stitched, stuffed and painted
canvas and nylon cord
55 x 13 x 2"

the context of the installation. Even without knowing their specific references, the shifting tones engage the viewer perceptually in concretized metaphors of life. The evolving color wheel (one of Schick's continuing fascinations) carries us through a pattern-in-transformation while the addition of metallics and neutrals suggests open-ended development. And Schick has designed the installation's structure to reinforce the dynamic evolution. Each neckpiece is cut as a square within a square, and the orientation of the interior and exterior squares shifts progressively with each neckpiece. Thus, aligning the interior squares offsets the corners of the squares' perimeters, forming the exterior of the installation into a twisting spiral; aligning the external squares sends a tunnel spiraling through the core.

The spiral form is an ancient metaphor for life's journey.[3] Here it also takes hold of the viewer's eyes and body, creating a feeling of being "slightly off-balance," as Schick observes. The spiral exerts such a compelling, physical tug that it creates an effect Michael Dunas attributes to Schick's wearable pieces: it "extend[s] the space of the body and establish[es] an energized field where jewelry and wearer interact."[4]

The *Deception* chess set of 2003 forces an even more acute awareness that we are players in a drama of perception. This is a dizzyingly complex study of black, white, and shades of gray. At first Schick's two basic units—squares of diagonal black and white stripes, and squares shading from white to black—seem reminiscent of African, Fijian, or pre-Columbian decorative motifs.[5] In fact, she deploys tone to create structure rather than mere pattern; the basic squares each play with figure/ground relationships and challenge the eye with optical illusions. The chessboard alone seems to quiver and deform from the horizontal. With the chess pieces added, the whole becomes an Escherian fantasy of nearly impossible physical structure. In contrast to Bauhaus-inspired "art" chess sets, where each piece is ornamented to suggest its range of motion, *Deception* bewilders, frustrates, and creates dilemmas that render perception, let alone strategic plays, infinitely challenging.[6] It is as if geometrical and mathematical principles of pattern rise up, defiantly independent of game rules and utilitarian assumptions about the object.

Tool Belt and Scarf for Sonia Delaunay, 2003
belt: painted wood, nylon cord, and nickel silver; length 20", width 65"
scarf: painted wood and nylon cord; 45 3/4 x 5 1/8 x 1/2"

From one perspective, *Deception* and "Progression" perform art's basic work of defamiliarization—transforming ignored details of ordinary objects into focal points of attention. Schick's pieces are unique, however, in foregrounding the whole-body physicality of engagement with art works. *Deception* is one of Schick's rare non-wearables, yet any viewer feels its physical impact—its assault on the eyes and the slight mental heaviness as overtaxed brain cells sort horizontal from vertical surfaces and seek boundaries between chess pieces. And "Progression'"s seductive tunnel reminds us of Jean-Paul Sartre's observation that the danger of a precipice is not that we will fall, but that we will leap willingly into the abyss.

These pieces make it impossible to ignore the acts of perception informing art apprehension. Rudolph Arnheim, E.H. Gombrich, and Nelson Goodman were some of the first to draw on

gestalt psychology to explore how seeing art is based in brain function, not a transfer of empirical properties into a disembodied mind. Contemporary neuroscience has only deepened the understanding that the processes (and abstract concepts) we conventionally detach from the body are rooted in the daily experience of engaging with the world as physical creatures. Within the field, Antonio Damasio in particular looks at a fundamental question: How does consciousness—our sense of Self—evolve? His answer helps explain the haunting pull of Schick's work.

Most theorists use "consciousness" to refer to mental functions such as moral judgment, spiritual awareness, or speculative exploration in mathematics, philosophy, or art. These, for Damasio, reflect the flowering of a mental life that is rooted in a more primordial process.[7] Consciousness emerges when we each develop a nonverbally-felt conviction that "I" am the one who thinks "my" thoughts, sees "my" mental images, and experiences "my" feelings. Damasio's research reveals that the specific form of these beliefs is an inevitable product of our neural and physiological make-up.

When a living being has contact with any object (understood broadly as an event, a physical thing, even a part of the organism's own body), the object elicits a reaction. At the very least it causes the being to focus its perceptual attention to judge if it should approach or avoid the object. Neural centers monitor changes in body chemistry and the musculoskeletal systems as the organism makes even the slightest response. Though these events take place at an unconscious level, they have profound effects. Neural systems provide representations of all responses to the organism; the signals let the organism know it is knowing something. Consciousness emerges from the accumulation of these internally-generated representations. It is a portrait we make of ourselves. We know ourselves by catching ourselves in the act of knowing objects.

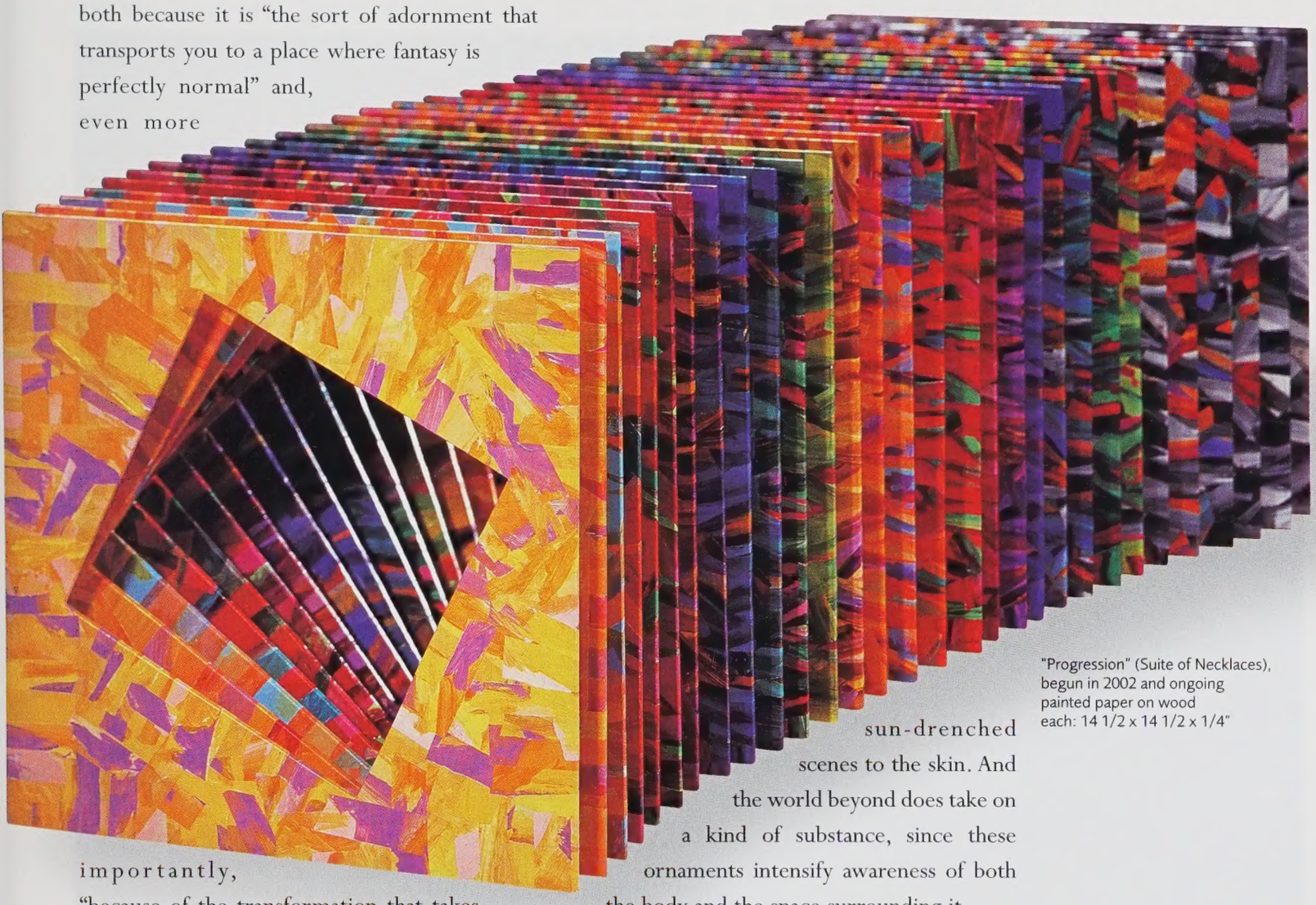
A misplaced confidence in our autonomy may blind us to the fact that consciousness is always *relational*, that our "I" does not precede, but only comes about through continual contact with a vast network of objects. An intuitive understanding of this fundamental truth seems to sit at the heart of Schick's artistic sensibility; it informs her very way of being in the world. Rudolph Arnheim has observed that in art "there is no direct transformation of experience into form, but rather a search for equivalents."[8] Schick always sets us in the presence of things evocative of something else: a bracelet masquerading as a teapot; cloaks that are walls of windows or a portion of a sidewalk; a necklace that entangles the wearer in glowing threads reminiscent of the dew-spangled spider web that inspired it. The whimsy of such objects may first make us smile, but eventually we wonder what it must feel like to occupy a sensibility surrounded by such connections. Schick's is a world rich in sensuously-felt associations, transpositions, and synthesthetic linkages. Yet, as Damasio points out, the structure of consciousness has consequences. If each of us is the central agent in a perspectival field that surrounds and includes our bodies, we also cannot share anyone else's consciousness. Schick's pieces, however, allow us to visit. A viewer struggling with *Deception* or carried beyond her/himself in the presence of "Progression" cannot help but be aware that objects have many different kinds of power over us. Such pieces re-stage the primal unconscious drama when consciousness emerges—and then re-emerges with different inflections—through engagement with an endless series of objects.

A misplaced confidence in our autonomy may blind us to the fact that consciousness is always relational, that our "I" does not precede, but only comes about through continual contact with a vast network of objects.

Schick's large wearable pieces bring these experiences intimately to the skin. *In Henri's Garden* (2003) uses a painted wall relief as a leafy

background for two broad necklaces, one representing a flower's corolla, the other carrying radiating petals of painted canvas. In color and style the group recalls the paintings of Henri Rousseau—"magical" work, in Schick's words. She attributes this quality to her grouping both because it is "the sort of adornment that transports you to a place where fantasy is perfectly normal" and, even more importantly, "because of the transformation that takes place for the wearer when the pieces are on." The wearer cannot ignore such a piece and the "magic" arises through the quality of awareness achieved. The wearer understands the piece's weight, mass, and form through the pressures it exerts on the shoulders and neck, and its effect on posture and movement. The wearer knows her/himself by way of the object and knows the object by way of the body. This is a relational knowledge, one that even affects the familiarity of one's face as the neckpieces reflect their color onto the cheeks or as the wearer twists the petals' stems, creating an array of shifting planes that frame and re-frame the face and shoulders.

In such moments, wearer and ornament meld. Sartre describes this experience of heightened perception thusly: "I discover something like the *flesh* of objects ....the warmth of air, the breath of the wind, the rays of sunshine, etc. [are] present to me...without a distance and reveal my flesh by means of their flesh."[9] Schick playfully brings Henri Rousseau's sun-drenched scenes to the skin. And the world beyond does take on a kind of substance, since these ornaments intensify awareness of both the body and the space surrounding it.



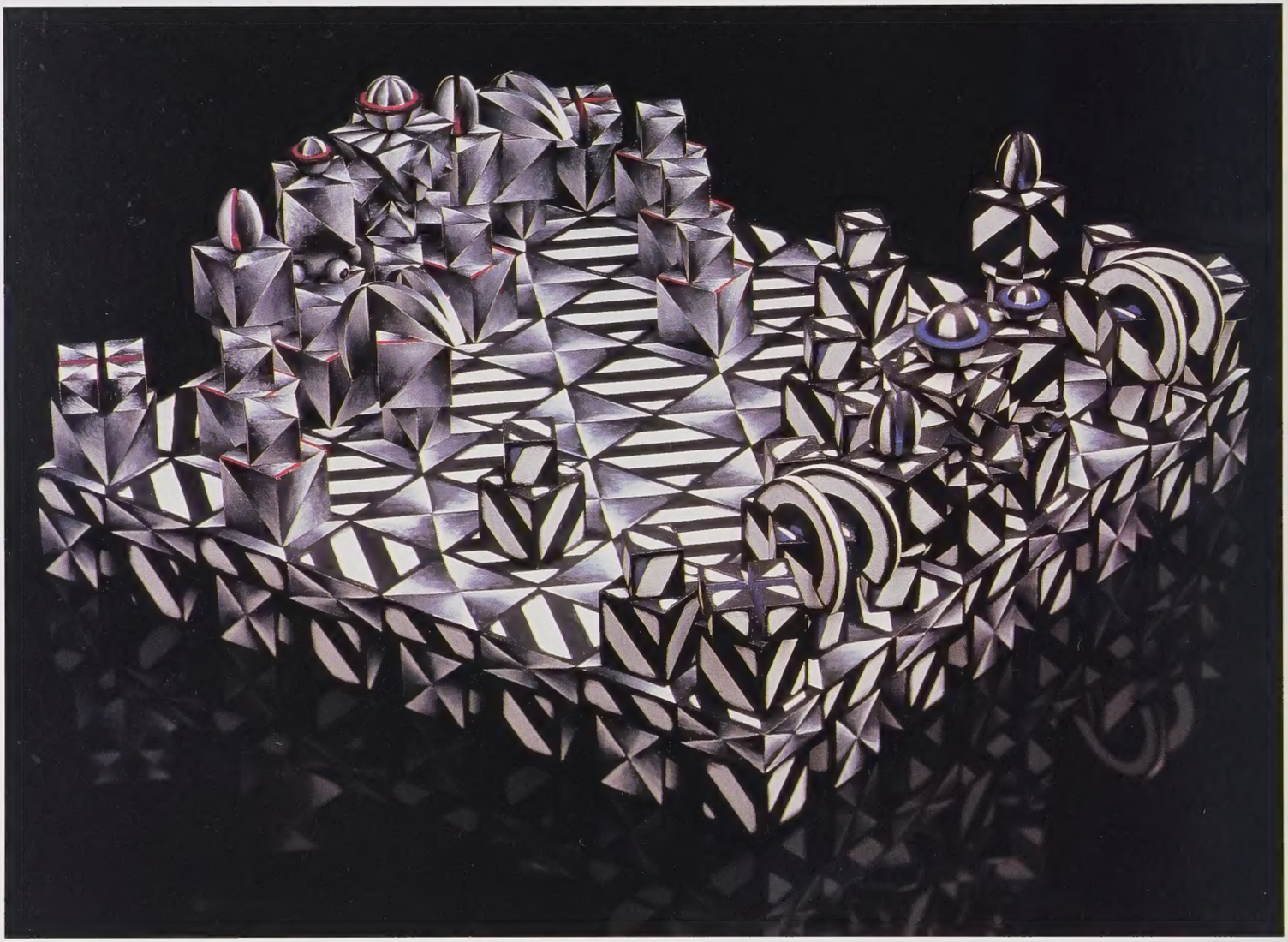
"Progression" (Suite of Necklaces), begun in 2002 and ongoing
painted paper on wood
each: 14 1/2 x 14 1/2 x 1/4"

Richard Serra has noted that as we walk around a sculpture, our perception of the negative space between our body and the sculptural surfaces is integral to aesthetic experience. Schick exploits the same phenomenon, but relocates us so we experience the flux of space from inside rather than outside the object. A large ornament remakes our body into a moving volume with an unfamiliar shape and size. Even awareness of our backs and what is behind us—usually unimportant in daily perception—becomes relevant for simple movement.

The often-ignored space between our bodies and objects takes on an aesthetic tinge. Pooling and shifting around us, that space also

seems to thicken, binding itself to our flesh—like the neckpiece that catalyzed its awareness.

Not surprisingly, Schick says she always aims to create an object with a "presence" greater than itself. More than an imposing appearance, as defined by Schick, "presence" is the rich symbiosis that entwines an object and an awakened wearer. This is why Schick may spend hundreds of hours painting a complex color system, adding layer after layer of paint to a form made of wood, papier-mâché, or canvas. Creating a rich textural surface can demand equal time as Schick struggles to attain her vision. Nevertheless, she insists that she doesn't want her labor to show (unlike artists who use surfaces to record the craft process). The sensuous qualities of a piece root the viewer's perception in the here and now, where presence emerges from relational understanding. Which brings us to Schick's fascination with creating "companions" for the display of her forms when they are not worn.



Deception (Chess Set), 2003
board: painted wood; 18 x 18 x 2 1/2"
chess pieces: painted wood and plastic laminate; from 2 1/2 x 1 1/2 x 1 1/2" to 5 1/4 x 3 x 2 1/2"

Like many of her flat neckpieces, *In Henri's Garden* has a wall relief for the ornaments' independent display. It furnishes the floral neckpieces with their leaves. (One can imagine they conceal a stem to root the objects to the wall.) Other pieces have free-standing companion sculptures. The non-wearable *Shadowed by the Light of a Full Moon: A Scoop For Moonbeams* (2002) pairs a painted wooden "scoop" with a soft, blurry-edged "shadow." More than a product of poetic fantasy, this practice demonstrates Schick's deeply ingrained impulse to express the interconnectedness of things. The companions (or multiples, in the case of *Deception* and "Progression"), Schick says, create "a situation in an environment," a relational context for a more complex understanding of the object. In the case of wearables, this rebuilds the ornament's connectedness when it is separated from the body. A companion sets the object in a three-dimensional context, just as wearing does, a

feature Schick builds into her wall reliefs by painting their wall side. The practice reflects the influence of Alma Eikerman, Schick's mentor during her graduate training at Indiana University, who told Schick, "the wearer would know." Schick adds, "I've just taken this a step further." She uses the strategy to complete each piece in a three-dimensional environment, whether it is worn or not worn, seen or unseen. The companions insure that the object's presence extends in all directions, a process that takes an extreme form in *Cocoon for Spiral Necklace* (2003), which features the largest of the companions.

This sculptural vessel dwarfs its *Spiral Necklace*. Like all the companions, however, it provides a unique relational context for the unworn ornament—a singular situation and atmosphere for the perception of the necklace. The ornament's presence is not only expanded by the physical space of the vessel, but by the intricacies required to see and handle the object. The cocoon has a metal substructure interwoven with threads and heavily textured so the whole hovers between line and mass, "exist[ing] in the inner and outer world." The color-worked surface enhances its liminality. Its hues seem to flicker like the aurora borealis. Shards of light tantalize the eye while tangled threads occlude a clear vision of the vessel's interior. *Cocoon* is mysterious. And, with the neckpiece coiling out of the vessel's aperture, it possesses a haunting organic—even erotic—quality, as if we have caught a creature luxuriating in its own colors, metamorphosing in its womb-like environment.

Cocoon gives concrete form to Schick's underlying sense that the world offers the flesh of objects for contact with our own. The sculpture enfolds the necklace, just as physical experience will enfold the wearer when she or he extends a hand and brings forth *Spiral Necklace* from its companion to nestle intimately against the neck. *Cocoon* is so imposing that we cannot help but envision the shifting relationships between the ornament, its companion, and our bodies. We are aware of so many facets of perception and interpretation that the object envelops us in an environment of awareness.

It is not surprising that we have few words for the many layers of thought and feeling that emerge from contact with such objects. As Damasio insists, emergent consciousness is nonverbal. It first "feels like a feeling," rather than being accessible through vision, taste, or touch.[10] Schick's pieces insure that we become aware—at an experiential level—that objects are not "outside" of and separate from us. While paintings remain on walls and sculptures stay fixed on pedestals, her pieces invite us into atmospheric spaces of color, light, texture, form, and meaning. To use Damasio's words, Marjorie Schick's objects reveal the structure of self-awareness "in a form that is both powerful and elusive, unmistakable and vague."[11] We know the relational bond of object to object, of our selves to object. Wordlessly we feel ourselves made conscious because of things. ■

Schick's pieces insure that we become aware—at an experiential level—that objects are not "outside" of and separate from us.

Tacey A. Rosolowski, a writer who currently resides in Washington, D.C., was the 2003 James Renwick Fellow in American Craft.

Photos: Gary Pollmiller
Model: Kathlene Allie

1 All quotations from the artist are taken from interviews and correspondence between March 2002 and July 2003.
2 Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1969), 42-43.
3 The spiral form also recalls DNA, the ordering code of all life. "Progression" contains its own code—the Mayan counting system of dots and dashes that Schick uses to number the neckpieces and keep them in proper series.
4 Michael Dunas, "Marjorie's Schtick." *Metalsmith*, Summer 1986, 24-31, 28.
5 See chapters one and three of Dorothy K. Washburn and Donald W. Crowe, *Symmetries of Culture: Theory and Practice of Plane Pattern Analysis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988). This is an extremely useful study of the mathematical principles at work in repeat patterns drawn from many cultures.
6 See www.bcmchess.co.uk/news/exhibition2003.html, a website of the *British Chess Magazine* that includes a discussion of the nineteen art chess sets in the exhibition, "The Art of Chess."
7 See Antonio R. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1999).
8 Rudolph Arnheim, *Toward a Psychology of Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 266.
9 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Pocket Books, 1956), 506.
10 Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*.
11 Ibid.

Heart (pin), 2001
sterling silver, 24k gold plate
2 3/8 x 2 3/8 x 2"
Photo: Doug Yaple

Keith Lewis

From Propagandist to Humanist

by Matthew Kangas

Muster (Pin in Memory of Peter V.), 1995
sterling silver
2 3/4 x 2"
Photo: Jim Cummins

Possibly the most controversial jewelry artist now working in the United States, Keith Lewis is undergoing a transition from propagandist to post-activist artist. Defiantly "out," queer, gay, and male, Lewis has spent the past decade or more dividing his time between teaching, lecturing, and making art.

That such a small body of work (roughly 40 objects) has generated such a raft of commentary and criticism underlines some key aspects of the American metals field: its poverty of artists addressing unpopular subjects; the in-bred system of academic group shows; and the nestling cocoon of protected free speech within the halls of tenured universities. The time has come to have a closer look at Lewis's art, to compare it to his voluminous and revealing writings, and to judge it on critical terms rather than the artist's own stentorian and often hysterical claims.

After teaching at Central Washington University (CWU) in Ellensburg for six years, Professor Lewis attained tenure in 2000. Until then, a heavy load of committees and teaching only permitted four solo gallery exhibitions (1988, 1993, 1995, 1999)—and 50 group shows, mostly on campuses, with a few abroad.

Despite sharing content with many contemporary painters and other sculptors, Lewis has never been written about in an art magazine. Instead, he has subsisted critically within the cozy craft

world, where commentary on his art has been shaped by his own extensive written and spoken statements of intent. Usually, the writers simply quote him rather than analyze his art. For so interesting and provocative an artist, this is a shame and a mistake. Controlling discourse is easier in the craft world because so few writers have ideas of their own. Lewis has supplied them all they need. To date, Lewis has essentially reviewed himself, and, as a result, has carried on a monologue of extreme claims with large doses of projected anger and guilt.

Is it even possible for us to step back and analyze such work objectively? So many red flags

> The making of jewelry is a political act. I see it as propaganda... [There is] a cloying hetero-defined reality...Their comfort...is my anxiety and outrage.

Sebastian (Imaginary Self-Portrait), 1999
sterling silver, 18k gold
3 1/2 x 1 1/2 x 1 1/2"
Photo: Doug Yaple

appear along with clanging alarm bells: gay sex, AIDS, explicit genitalia, self-absorption, and oft-proclaimed guilt. Space does not permit a thorough meta-critical analysis of the reviews of his work, but it is worth setting Lewis in a historical context; repeating his intentions based upon his writing and lectures; assessing published opinion; and, finally, noting how, most surprising of all, he has dropped propaganda art of late, reconciled with the heterosexual world, and fully embraced a broader definition of humanity and the decorative dimension.

Since CWU is the birthplace of Northwest Funk jewelry[1] and a haven for the discovery of found-object jewelry[2], it is entirely appropriate that Lewis replaced Ken Cory (1943-1994) as jewelry professor at Ellensburg. Cory's work had a strong, if submerged, erotic character, too, but it grew out of a complex puzzle system that frequently concealed sex as much as it revealed it.

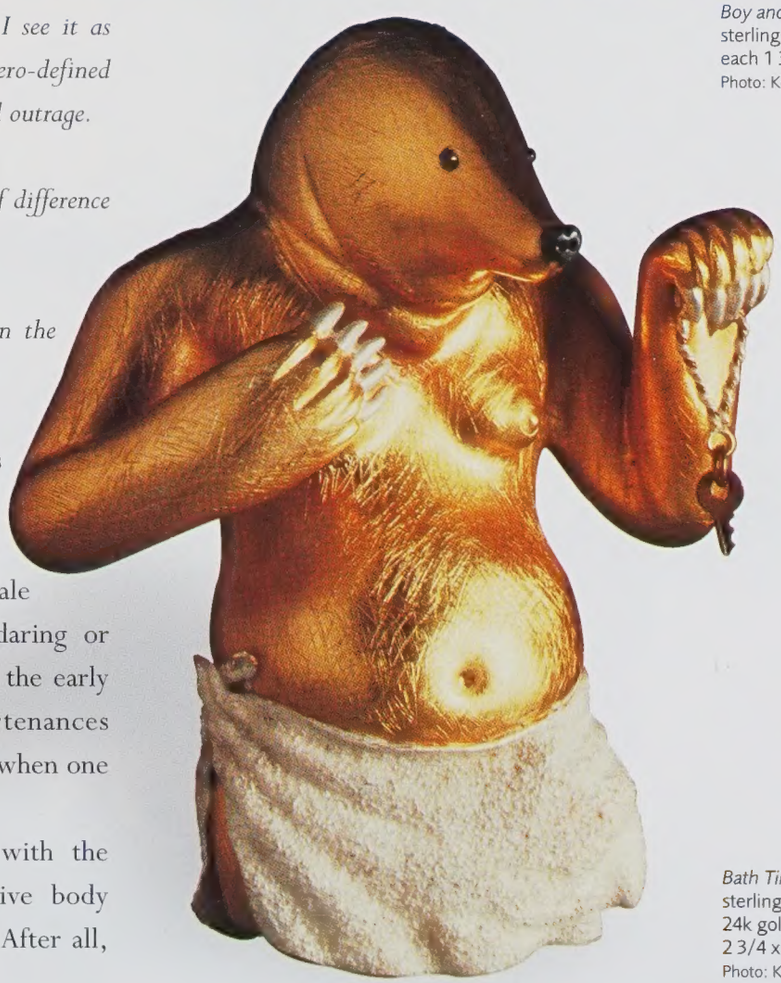
For Lewis, his position at CWU has afforded him a bully pulpit. As he told a Boston audience, "I live to lecture!"[3] AIDS activism preoccupied him long before he completed his graduate studies with metalsmith Kathleen Browne at Kent State University in 1993. And although accompanied by slides of his work, his numerous guest lectures served primarily as a launching pad for bold political positions. A few gems shared with undergraduate and graduate students include:

Boy and Girl Spread (pins), 2001
sterling silver and limoges enamel
each 1 3/4 x 1 3/8 x 1/4"
Photo: Keith Lewis

The making of jewelry is a political act. I see it as propaganda... [There is] a cloying hetero-defined reality...Their comfort...is my anxiety and outrage.

These people won't stop until every shred of difference that distinguishes us...is obliterated.

The heterosexist project depends heavily on the eradication of our history.[4]



Bath Time, 1995
sterling silver, fine silver, plastic,
24k gold plate
2 3/4 x 2"
Photo: Keith Lewis

Do the pins, brooches, and necklaces hold up to these provocative claims? Hardly. As early as 1988, the four golden tummies with "expanding" male genitals seemed more amusing than daring or angry. The headless cartoon figures of the early "self-portraits" with symbolic appurtenances seem diminutive and dainty, especially when one notes the gold plating.

How does an activist-artist deal with the essential paradox of jewelry: attractive body ornaments typically worn by women? After all,

Daisy Chain (necklace), 2001(detail)
sterling silver, 18k gold, magazine photos, watch crystals
diameter 7"
Photo: Doug Yaple

even though one writer called them "sculpture that happens to have a pin on the back,"[5] if no one wears them, they're not activated at all, let alone activist. Along these lines, by 1992 self-loathing became a central subject in Lewis's work, artfully and attractively done despite imagery of skin-gouging as in *Just a Few Pricks* (1992); *Peeling Off* (1993); and *Well, Doug, It's 36 Now* (1994). Expressed as AIDS survivor-guilt, self-loathing has been a powerful and effective position for Lewis as an artist. As he confessed to a group of students in Boston: "Why did the virus that killed him...hesitate to leap to me?"[6] This joined a more troubling confession of guilt and possible bad faith: "How legitimate is this work? Does it prostitute the lives of the people that I called my friends?...I sell this stuff for money...My project seems yet more callous and dishonest."[7]

Before that 2002 mea culpa, Lewis produced another dozen or so pins tracking the spread of AIDS among friends, dedicating memorial works to them, and exhibiting in the sympathetic San Francisco Bay Area (the site of his best reviews). Pride, rather than guilt, might be a more appropriate, if less opportune, emotion for the artist. Enhanced workmanship and potent animal surrogates (a rooster, a bear, a shrimp, an elk) make these pins among the best of the survivor-guilt series. *Bath Time* (1995), for example, uses a golden bear to satirize portly middle-aged gays at a steam bath (and virus-infection site), while *Salt Lick* (1996) adds real-diamond semen droplets to the gold-over-silver six-pack torso, enriching the artist's most explicit image yet of masturbation. Together, they take the notion of male brooches as icebreakers or conversation-starters to another extreme: art as the surrogate pick-up line in a bar. A Lewis pin on a man says, "Get closer and have a look." But could these outrageous ornaments ever really "encourage a change in societal attitudes," as one curator hoped?[8] Not likely. No more so than Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* did or Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*.

Tool (necklace), 2000 (detail)
sterling silver, copper, 18k gold, pen on paper
diameter 18"
Photo: Keith Lewis

Now accepting the existence of the majority of the human race—women—Lewis is finally free to depict a wider range of anatomical parts. *Daisy Chain* anticipates the current, reconciliatory phase of his art.

A sabbatical in 2001-2002 led to a significant breakthrough: the appearance of the female figure, the depiction of heterosexual intercourse, and the diminution of the artist's strident anti-straight rhetoric. Lewis's embrace of a broader humanism has enriched his work immeasurably. Now accepting the existence of the majority of the human race—women—Lewis is finally free to depict a wider range of anatomical parts. *Daisy Chain* (2001) anticipates the current, reconciliatory phase of his art. A silver and gold necklace with watch-crystal-size linked elements, each circle is filled with a different photographic image of the human anus, appropriated from available pornographic magazines. At least non-phallic in character (which is a refreshing change with Lewis), *Daisy Chain* also seems closer with its necklace structure to women's jewelry. It was preceded by the paradoxical *Tool* necklace (2000), which uses intricate drawings of male and female genitalia interspersed with images of punning tools: pliers, screws, screwdrivers, vices, and nails.

Neckpiece for Zymrina (pin), 2002
sterling silver, fine silver, 24k gold plate, enamel, pearls
neckpiece diameter: 10 1/4"
each pin: 4 3/8 x 2 3/8 x 3/8"
Photo: Doug Yaple

Similarly expansionist in spirit, *Boy and Girl Spread* (2001) introduces Limoges enamel technique in a series of his and hers rings and pins, each displaying appropriated porno images, in this case, low-angle views of male and female genitals seen from beneath the figures' bodies, a typical adult movie camera viewpoint.

Most promising of all, *Neckpiece for Zymrina* (2002) is an ingenious necklace of detachable pins, each with a different enameled image based on pornographic frescoes at Pompeii (where the artist traveled during his sabbatical). Coming around to a more inclusive view of sex, one more comparable to Petronius's line from his *Satyricon*—"If it is human, I cannot reject it"—Lewis has matured from an angry propagandist to a poetic artist of high achievement. Still queer, the extravagantly beautiful gold filigree, the inset diamonds and pearls, and the comfortable wearability of Zymrina's necklace all move Lewis closer to a sexually integrated community, one in which straights and gays may coexist (as they did in Rome and Pompeii) with mutual respect and tolerance. Rejecting the sexual isolationism of his Act-Up activist years, Lewis now embraces a more varied population. Just as dividing lines between gays and straights in society as a whole are blurring of late, along with vanishing legal barriers and establishment religious prejudices, so has Lewis softened his stand by shifting to female imagery.

Lewis, still involved with his precious "genderfuck" issues but now more open to sexual co-existence within a society still struggling, in this case, through its art, to create meaningful cultural artifacts.

The AIDS pins were indeed, as one critic put it, "talismans that mark an angry reckoning of our nation's failure to engage this [AIDS] calamity."[9] However, *Daisy Chain, Boy and Girl Spread* and *Neckpiece for Zymrina* herald a new, post-activist Lewis, still involved with his precious "genderfuck" issues but now more open to sexual co-existence within a society still struggling, in this case, through its art, to create meaningful cultural artifacts. ⧗

Matthew Kangas is the author of "Prometheus Ascending: Homoerotic Imagery of the Northwest School," in *Homosexuality and Homosexuals in the Arts*, Garland Publishing, 1992.

Editor's Note: Keith Lewis became a member of SNAG's Board of Directors and of *Metalsmith's* Editorial Advisory Committee in May 2003. This article was commissioned earlier that year without any prior knowledge of his subsequent appointments.

1 Matthew Kangas, "Ellensburg Funky," *Metalsmith*, Fall 1995, 14-21.
2 Kangas, "The Age of Solberg," *Metalsmith*, Winter 1995, 24-29.
3 Keith Lewis, "Body Politic," unpublished lecture notes, delivered at University of Wisconsin—Green Bay, April 1999.
4 Ibid.
5 Chiori Santiago, "Keith Lewis Undercover," *Metalsmith*, Summer 2000, 46.
6 Keith Lewis, "Embodied: Flesh, Memory and Longing," unpublished lecture notes, delivered in Boston, September 2002.
7 Ibid.
8 Barbara Tannenbaum, *Her Story/His Story: Jewelry and Sculpture by Kathleen Browne and Keith Lewis*. Akron, OH: Akron Art Museum, 1994.
9 Santiago, "Keith Lewis Undercover."

Charm (bracelet), 2002
sterling silver, 24k gold plate, enamel, horn, bone
7 7/8 x 1 x 1/8"
Photo: Doug Yaple

Hard-On Ring (up), 2001
14k gold
1 1/4 x 3/4 x 3/4"
Photo: Keith Lewis

Silver teapot from 1984 by Tiffany's conservator of silverware, Wendy Yothers
13 x 14"
Photo: Dick Duane.

Beyond the Blue Box

The Tiffany & Co. Conservation Lab

by Anne Larsen Hollerbach

"The work talks," Wendy Yothers explains as she sets down a plastic bin and lifts out a sterling teapot that needs her attention. The lid has lost its original ebony finial, and sports in its place a worn knob from a dresser drawer and the distinct air of an earl embarrassed in a pawnshop. Yesterday Yothers received the production drawings from the archives upstairs, and now she can see how to restore the teapot's dignity to its nineteenth-century designer's exact specifications. More than 100 years after being sold by Tiffany & Co., this piece has been returned to the firm's conservation department for a touch-up that will carry it through its next century of service.[1]

Wendy Yothers is Tiffany's conservator of silverware. She has taken a winding road to this workbench, beginning with a BFA from the University of Michigan, graduate work at Texas Tech, and then the formal course of training at the guild-sponsored college for silversmiths in Finland. With her journeyman's certificate in hand, she went to Denmark to earn her master's title. Her European education stressed the skills necessary for making silverware in an industrial setting. After a number of years in Tiffany's silver studio, Yothers finds that the position of conservator feeds her insatiable hunger for technical insight as well as her passion for the magnificent historic silverwork.[2]

"You wouldn't believe what you can learn from these pieces. The guys who made them solved every problem I could ever imagine, and those solutions still work 100 years later. Of course there are lots of pieces like this teapot. I see so many things that are damaged by people who did not understand what they were doing. Every hand that ever worked on them leaves evidence."

Just as a shell contains the sound of the sea, the pieces that pass through the conservation lab at Tiffany & Co. carry within themselves a larger and older voice, a tide of sound made up of the clamor of the workshop and the voices of many generations of skilled silversmiths and designers discussing production schedules, debating points of structure and finish, and always striving to push the frontier of the possible further than any other manufacturer. Yothers claims that in the case of some of the *tour de force* pieces produced for World's Fairs and other industrial exhibitions, she can hear swearing in the mix as well.

"When you examine these things, you can hear the guys in the shop figuring it all out.

An aisle in the Tiffany archive collection room where pieces are stored when they are not on loan to exhibitions.

Sometimes you know they must have told the designer when something was impossible, but they found a way to do it anyway. They used the hardest solder they could in each situation, and invented wonderful cold joining techniques. When I have to take something apart for repair or refurbishment, it's clear that they planned for such eventualities. An object that cannot be maintained by later generations cannot survive."

The 1876 New York City Yacht Club Regatta Trophy as it arrived in the Tiffany conservation lab and after reconstruction.

The conservation lab, located at the Tiffany & Co. manufacturing facility in Parsippany, NJ, is a long, stark room with high ceilings and cold fluorescent light. There are only a few tools visible, and none of the creative clutter one associates with the fermentation of new work. The environment speaks more of the clinic than the studio. In 1987, when a group of investors purchased Tiffany & Co. from its parent company Avon Products, the new administration created a formal archives department to oversee the collection of nearly one million design drawings, production records, and correspondence that had been accumulating since the early 1850s. At the same time, the company committed itself to seeking out and purchasing significant pieces produced by their studios. They now hold just over 1700 historically and aesthetically important items of silverware, jewelry, and crystal. These pieces travel to museums and put in periodic appearances in displays at more than 100 Tiffany retail stores around the world.

Charles L. Tiffany (1812-1902) opened his first store in 1837 to provide stationery and luxury goods to the people of New York. By 1847 he added silverware to his inventory. It sold so well that in 1851 he contracted with the workshop of John C. Moore to produce silverware exclusively for the Tiffany firm.[3] John Moore retired shortly thereafter and left the direction of the silver studio to his gifted son Edward C. Moore (1827-91). Moore's passion for natural forms and Oriental designs combined to create a distinctly American aesthetic that foreshadowed the rise of Art Nouveau.[4] In addition, Moore's technical excellence and managerial insight led the migration of commercial silverware away from the small independent studios into increasingly mechanized industrial facilities centered in the northeastern United States. This consolidation allowed craftsmen to specialize and excel in specific areas such as chasing and engraving in a way that they could not have done in a studio with only a few skilled hands available to do all the necessary tasks of production.[5]

This combination of a deep pool of skilled workers and substantial capital support meant that Moore's studio could create work of unprecedented size, style, and quality. Charles Tiffany took full advantage of this resource to further both his entrepreneurial vision and his patriotism by having Moore design and build numerous exceptional objects, especially for international trade exhibitions. In 1867, a piece designed by Edward Moore won the grand prize for silver craftsmanship at the Paris Exposition Universelle, a first for an American manufacturer in this field. Following this success, Charles Tiffany purchased Moore's entire operation

...the company committed itself to seeking out and purchasing significant pieces produced by their studios. They now hold just over 1700 historically and aesthetically important items of silverware, jewelry, and crystal.

outright and designated Moore as the manager of the newly created silverware division. Tiffany & Co.'s New York store soon boasted one of the finest inventories of silverware in the world, a standard it has upheld to the present day, outlasting nearly every other manufacturer founded in the same period. As a result, the items in the archive collection represent an unusually intact cross section of American design, taste, and technical achievement in silver.

In addition to maintaining the archive collection, the conservation lab serves a larger, more diffuse collection of Tiffany objects: every piece of Tiffany silverware and jewelry ever purchased by any customer can be sent to the lab for evaluation, conservation, and repair. Wendy Yothers' access to the original production drawings gives her unparalleled insight into the structure of these objects. For instance, when the New York Yacht Club sent her a regatta trophy commissioned from Tiffany in 1876, it was so battered that the designer's drawing was the only way to determine its original appearance. Yothers made molds from the fragmentary parts, cast new pieces, and reassembled the trophy to match the drawing.

Items sent by customers usually arrive in need of straightforward repair, such as tightening the handle on a coffee pot or truing the hinge on a delicate enameled box. Many of the pieces that come to the conservation lab from the archive collection or a private customer have their own stories. A legendary professional golfer sends his gold putter in periodically for a buff, with strict instructions to leave the visible dings—and their associated anecdotes—exactly as they are. A complete tea service given to a young bride 120 years ago came in for refurbishment before going to the bride's great-great-granddaughter on the occasion of her wedding.

Some pieces arrive having suffered genuine adventures. Recently, Yothers worked on an elaborate sword and scabbard commissioned by the officers and privates of the 25th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers for Col. Edwin Upton in the early 1860s. Tiffany began making presentation swords in 1861 for Union officers and heroes.[6] The Co. purchased blades made by famous European steel manufacturers, then ornamented them with etching, engraving, decorative hilts, guards, and other accessories. They made approximately 100 reasonably ornate swords and about 30 exceptionally ornate ones. The rarity and beauty of these weapons makes them among the most valuable of Civil War collectibles, and that value does not always work in their favor.

In 2000, a burglar stole Col. Upton's sword from the collection of the Historical Society in Fitchburg, MA, and then jettisoned his loot into a local pond, where it marinated for 14 months

Every piece of Tiffany silverware and jewelry ever purchased by any customer can be sent to the lab for evaluation, conservation, and repair.

Blade from the Upton presentation sword after immersion in a pond and months in a damp environment. The same section of the blade after restoration.

before being recovered. The FBI returned the sword to the Historical Society in a tank of water, knowing that exposure to air would do serious harm to the wet steel. Unfortunately, others who handled the sword on its circuitous route to the Tiffany conservation lab did not know this, so by the time it finally arrived, the blade had been sitting in the damp scabbard for months.[7]

"Well, thank goodness it was fresh water," Yothers says. "The enamel was horribly darkened and fractured, the steel was corroded, and the original patination in the engraved and etched areas was gone." Fortunately Yothers's past experience making Damascus steel helped her understand how to restore the blade's surface without compromising its value. The sword is safely home again, with a longer provenance and

A Renaissance-inspired coffeepot by Tiffany designer Paulding Farnham created for the 1900 Paris Exposition. The piece arrived slathered with lead solder, which had to be carefully removed before cracks in the sides and damage to the swags could be repaired.
Photo from John Loring, *Magnificent Tiffany Silver* (New York: Henry Abrams, 2001).

Tiffany designer Paulding Farnham's 28" high tankard in ivory and silver, created for the 1900 Paris Exposition. Photo from John Loring, *Magnificent Tiffany Silver* (New York: Henry Abrams, 2001).

a new gleam.

Often Yothers wishes that people undertaking repairs and restoration would read the Hippocratic Oath, dwelling at length on the line "First, do no harm." She frequently receives work seriously injured by the ignorance or haste of earlier efforts.

"The sad thing is that most of these folks mean well," she says. "They just don't know that the eggplant-purple color on the pitcher is a Japanesque patina, not tarnish, so they dip it, or polish it all away."

In some cases, ignorance causes real catastrophe. Tiffany designer Paulding Farnham created a 28 inch tall tankard for the 1900 Paris Exposition.[8] The body consists of a single hollowed section of elephant tusk, completely covered in high relief carvings of lions fighting gorillas in a dense jungle. The base, handle, and hinged lid are heavy sterling cast and carved into crocodiles, snakes, vegetation, and a charging elephant. It is a very imposing item, and at some point, someone felt so convinced that they needed to disassemble it that they took a

hammer and punch to the hinge in order to remove the lid. They succeeded in removing the upper sterling frame, and the tusk promptly expanded and cracked along its growth rings, and threatened to shed one of the lions completely. The tankard was hastily reassembled and sat for several years before Tiffany & Co. bought it for the archive collection. Yothers found a way to stabilize the ivory, retain the lion, and make the piece sound enough to travel to exhibitions. One can barely make out the repair on the ivory, but the gouges in the hinge are still painfully apparent.

The most common misguided repair, and perhaps the most insidious, is the use on silver of low temperature solders containing lead. There are many formulations, so the degree of damage can vary. The lead penetrates the sterling and alters the structure of the alloy, weakening and darkening it. If the piece is ever heated again, the lead solder will eat holes in the piece. One of the most challenging restorations Yothers ever did involved an historically important teapot designed by Paulding Farnham. The pot had split along three seams and been slathered with lead solder. The ornamental figure and swags were also thoroughly contaminated. It took over a month to chemically remove the dangerous solder so Yothers could safely reassemble the piece using silver solder. Perched on its niche in the archive the clean lines of the pot look pristine, but Yothers can perceive the invisible patina of her angst and invective all over it.

The work of conservation demands much: technical prowess, practical experience, obsessive attention to detail, a willingness to do historical research. You have to find the confidence to disassemble huge, ornate objects or to fabricate bits that exactly match the famous original. It takes a certain tolerance for disappointment when something cannot be completely restored because we no longer know how it was made in the first place. For Yothers, the difficulty of the work is minor compared to the passion she feels for these pieces and their makers. In the archives storage facility she happily shows how the silversmith charged with making the running horse for the Comanche Trophy in 1837 vented the hollow sculpture where real horses are also vented, deep inside the ears and yes, right up under the tail.

"How can you not love that?" she asks. ⧗

It takes a certain tolerance for disappointment when something cannot be completely restored because we no longer know how it was made in the first place.

Anne Larsen Hollerbach is a metalsmith residing in Franklin, Massachusetts.

[1] The author would like to thank Linda Buckley, Vice President of Public Relations, and James Kline, Manager of Repair Services at Tiffany & Co. for their assistance with this article.

[2] For an article featuring Wendy Yothers's own silverwork, see "Profiles of Modern Day Silversmiths: Wendy Yothers" in *Silver Magazine*, Vol. 35, no. 3, 2003.

[3] For a detailed narrative of the founding of Tiffany & Co.'s silver department and the role of Edward C. Moore, see Charles H. Carpenter Jr and Mary Grace, *Tiffany Silver* (San Francisco: Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 1997), chapters two and three.

[4] See "The Emergence of a Tiffany Style: Edward C. Moore" in John Loring, *Magnificent Tiffany Silver* (New York: Henry Abrams, 2001).

[5] For an overview of this transformation in silver manufacturing, see Charles L. Venable, *Silver in America, 1840-1940: a Century of Splendor* (New York: Henry Abrams, Inc. 1994), especially chapters four, seven, and eight.

[6] Carpenter, 133-41.

[7] Interview with Elizabeth A. Hannula, Director, Fitchburg Historical Society, Fitchburg, MA, August 2003.

[8] For images of many of Farnam's other remarkable pieces, see Loring, chapter three.

"CAPTURING THE SUBLIME: THE ENAMELS OF MARILYN DRUIN"
THE NEWARK MUSEUM, NEW JERSEY
JUNE 15, 2003 – JANUARY 11, 2004

by GERALDINE VELASQUEZ

Upon entering the exhibition, "Capturing the Sublime: The Enamels of Marilyn Druin" at the Newark Museum, one is struck by the variety and complexity of the objects in the display cases. The singleness of vision, however, leaves no doubt that the jewelry, goblets, and objects are the creation of one person with outstanding talent. Druin's deep commitment to the possibilities of the medium, the progression of increasingly complex surfaces under and within the enamel, and her breadth of colors make her a modern master in enamel.

Calling to mind the enamels of Fabergé, Druin's work awes the viewer by achieving the same level of accomplishment while creating its own vocabulary. *Byzantium* (1997) is an example of her rich narrative surface using cloisonné and basse-taile enamel. The works are explorations of the possibilities of a medium she pushed to its boundaries, but never beyond the recognizable definition of what is enamel. Her accomplishment is that she became a Master Craftsperson on her journey to becoming an artist.

The exhibition is chronologically grouped, starting in the 1960s, and ends by focusing on Druin's highly successful collaboration with goldsmith Michael Good. Early works are done in an Art Nouveau style in silver. Druin's increasing use of complex techniques, such as guilloche and basse-taille, mostly self-taught, were responsible for the greatest changes in her work. *Mandala* (1995), reflects her maturing style, the rich colors enhanced by an ametrine stone.

Though the technology of enamels remained relatively unchanged for centuries, Druin developed new procedures for herself. She incorporated floating gold and silver particles into the vitreous surface. She employed etching, stamping, roller-printing, and guilloche to modify the base metal for her enamels, and combined the basse-taille engraving techniques that became the hallmark of her work. *Golden Sampler* (2001) was created for an international exhibition in Delhi and is now in the collection of the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. In the 1990s, Druin started using high karat gold, which enhanced the warmth of her surfaces. Not immune to the market, she also added diamonds, knowing that the fine metals and stones enabled her to recover the costs of the intense labor she put into each object.

Simple geometric shapes, such as a circle with a cutout center hole or a rectangle, became signature forms, housing complex surfaces. *Circle* (2000) represents her favorite shape, with repetition in the swirls of gold wires and bezel set diamonds. Her goblets were the means by which Druin pushed her technique further, learning what enamel did as it cooled on convex and concave surfaces. *Goblet/Kiddush Cup* (1998) shows the thoughtful architecture of the stand supporting the perfectly raised bowl. Lines of gold flow round the cup designating paths for subtle and rich colors.

In the last five years of her life Druin produced the most complex of her works, enameling the undulating surfaces of the anticlastic raised bowls and nests formed by Michael Good. Born out of an encounter at the 1996 ACC Baltimore Crafts Show, the collaboration became a meeting of two souls who saw their work more as a dialogue with the universe than a production of objects. Good says, "We needed each other at that time because I needed color in the same way that she needed motion for her metal." *Octopus Sculpture* (1999) is composed of two stands for a rare 35 mm pearl commissioned by the Golay Group of Switzerland.

From 2000 until her death in 2001, Druin worked on transcending the nature of her materials—glass and metal—to achieve works with the lightness and fragile delicacy of birds' eggs. Impossibly worked in raised silver, covered with 40 layers of transparent and translucent enamels over shimmering patterns in the metal itself, their surfaces are streaked and flecked with gold. Gem-like, they look like gifts for a Czar. *Bird's Nest #3* (2001-2002), one of the series of eggs, was unfinished at her death and was completed by her daughter Erica. Druin passed her legacy on to her, knowing that her daughter was just as fearless in the exploration of the medium as she was herself.

Nature and faith sustained Druin as an artist. The *Gardens of Avon* (2000) reflects everything she observed living at the shore, especially the ever-changing colors of sky and ocean. But Druin acknowledged that a greater power guided her hand. "I sing the Ali (a Hebrew song of praise) as I work," she said shortly before her death. "The sound follows my hand as I rhythmically apply the glaze over and over, up to 40 times." Her art, like the hymn, lives on to inspire us.

An exhibition catalogue is available from the museum.

Geraldine Velasquez is professor of art at Georgian Court College in New Jersey, where she founded the Forum for Research and Criticism in the Crafts in 1995.

clockwise from lower left
Birds Nest #3, 2001-2002
(in collaboration with Michael Good)
22 and 24k gold, enamel, fine silver
3 x 5"

Byzantium (brooch/pendant), 1997
fine and sterling silver, enamel, 24k gold, garnet
2 3/4 x 2 1/2"

Gardens of Avon (brooch/pendant), 2000
18 and 24k gold, enamel, fine silver, diamonds
1 5/8 x 2"

"MARIKO KUSUMOTO"

MOBILIA GALLERY, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
JUNE 17–JULY 31, 2003

by CLAIRE SANFORD

Mariko Kusumoto's solo show at Mobilia Gallery consists of four individual works, each containing so many layers of information and so many moving or removable parts that this small, portable collection can take hours to explore. Born in Japan and now firmly rooted in the United States, Kusumoto draws deeply from her past in the formal composition and the choice of images and etched backgrounds used in her beautifully detailed boxes.

In *Mother Nature II*, a curtain-framed, open-front box reveals a tiny pregnant torso and 19 interchangeable rings, each with domes of clear resin containing different rich and fertile images or natural objects. Rings with tiny dried fish, a moth with pearls, and old photographs, to name just a few, can be set in the torso to create a window of fantasy and imagination into the pregnant "belly." The experience of pregnancy, so easily described in trite terms, is here given both a sense of joy and reverence for the absurd miracle that occurs within.

Tansu No Oku is something of a cross between a curio box and a pop-up book. On one page, Kusumoto presents a collection of butterflies under glass and old clip-art images. Each hang on a hand, set there to "hold" the object while studying it. While this first page of *Tansu No Oku* appears distinctly Western, the second page presents a version of Imperial Japan. Set in the style of a stage or altar, against the backdrop of the Rising Sun and Mount Fuji, a small boy in a uniform emerges as Momotaro from a giant peach, fanned by a geisha and surrounded by plum blossoms. Appearing as stereotypical studies of an older Japan, this is its own collection of curios.

In *Kisekae Doll*, a framed box houses two small articulated dolls, a girl and a boy. In the same way that post-war Japanese have feet in both cultures, each doll has both Western and traditional clothing, hats or hairstyles, toys, and accessories. Every surface is patterned, every edge is considered, each object has its own place. Choices are not random or accidental—they are as considered and deliberate as the preparations for a tea ceremony.

Iroha Uta is the most ambitious and completely resolved of Kusumoto's works, and reflects the purposeful and precise cabinetry of Japanese architecture. Best described as a traveling cabinet, it opens to reveal 26 small doors, one for each letter of the alphabet. Each door contains its own complicated scene, many with moving parts. With all the doors open, the effect is overwhelming but, when doors are opened one at a time, the process becomes one of discovery and appreciation. The images, too numerous to list in their entirety, are layered with cultural and personal references. In her artist's statement, Kusumoto describes growing up in an ancient Buddhist temple and having to polish the metal ornaments for the altars. The connection to her past is clearly evident in this work, from the delicate application of patinated surfaces describing centuries of use to the carefully rendered spaces within each of the compartments. The combinations of disparate images are fresh and lively, even though the subject matter bespeaks a time long past.

There is little in this group of four pieces that refers to modern Japan, or even the modern world. The collection of images and the forms in which Kusumoto presents them reveal a window into a distant memory of childhood, or rather, considering her age, the collective memory of her parents. Lovingly and carefully preserved, there is a quality of something important or precious to be protected and passed on. Background and surface textures range from old Japanese newspapers to wood grain (an interesting play on mokume-gane) to intricately rendered textiles and cabinetry hardware. All the work shows an astounding level of detail without being over processed. Kusumoto seems to understand when it is appropriate to leave a bit of solder and when it's necessary for the maker's hand to disappear. The cleverness with which these pieces are constructed is matched by the subtly combined, beautifully composed imagery. Although clearly personal, these pieces manage to transcend what often bogs down work that focuses on self and describe a private past in an imaginative and poetic way. Even without a broad understanding of Kusumoto's cultural roots, one can recognize the artist's desire to preserve and appreciate her past.

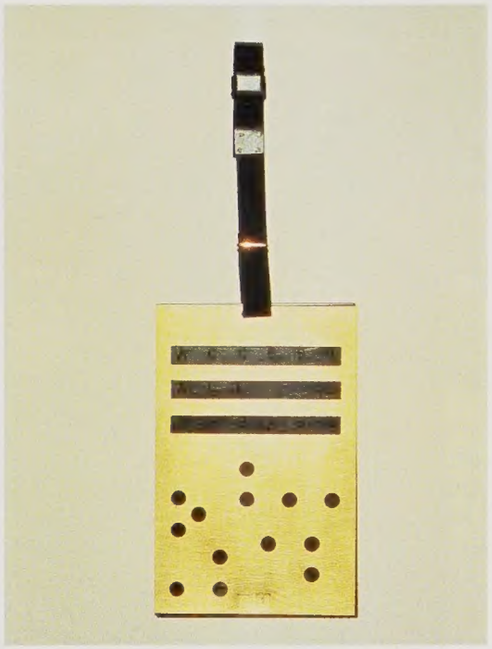
Claire Sanford is a metalsmith and jeweler in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

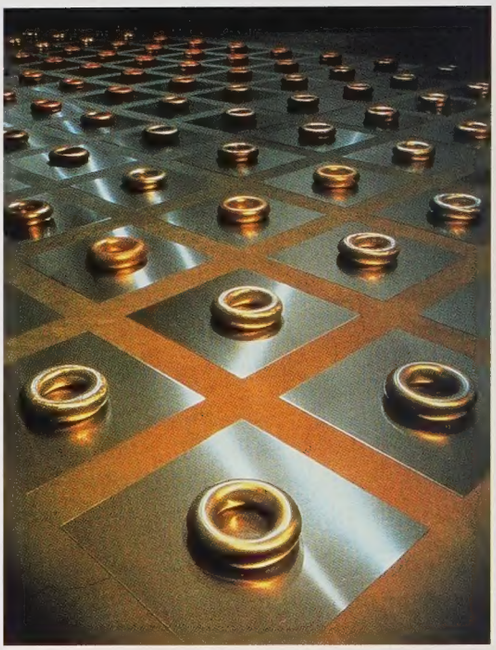
clockwise from lower left

Iroha Uta, 2003
copper, nickel silver, brass, bronze, sterling silver, rice paper, 24K gold leaf, resin, ruby, thread
12 x 10 x 4" (closed); 12 x 20 x 2" (open)
Photo: Galen Palmer

Tansu No Oku, 2002
copper, brass, nickel silver, bronze, resin, found objects, sterling silver
10 1/2 x 7 3/4 x 3 1/4" (closed); 10 1/2 x 16 x 2" (open)
Photo: M. Lee Fatherree

Kisekae Doll, 2002
copper, brass, sterling silver, nickel silver, bronze, found objects, wooden box
3 x 13 x 11 1/2"
Photo: M. Lee Fatherree

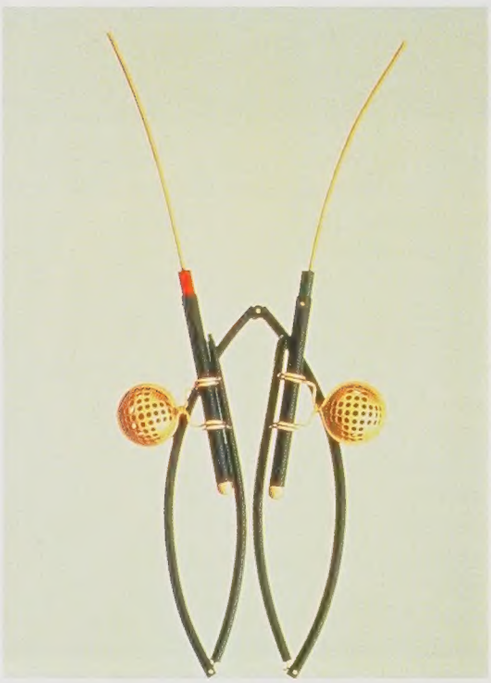




"TECHNO CRAFT: THE WORK OF SUSAN COHN 1980 TO 2000"

NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA, VICTORIA, MELBOURNE
MARCH 14–JUNE 9, 2003

by TRACEY CLEMENT



"Techno Craft" documents 20 years in the career of Australian metalsmith Susan Cohn. The exhibition presents a vast body of work that ranges from elegant tableware to distinctive jewelry to the streetwise practicality of her *cohndom box*. As an established and respected crafts person, and as the first Australian to have her designs produced by the Italian firm Alessi, Cohn is something of an icon in the local design scene. "Techno Craft," as part of the National Gallery of Australia's traveling exhibition program, brings the work and ideas of this internationally renowned metalsmith to the attention of a wider national audience.

Cohn entered the jewelry arena in 1980, the beginning of a decade that, according to craft theorist Ralph Turner, "witnessed the most radical spirit in jewelry's history." Twenty years later, Cohn still seems infused with this spirit. She talks openly about sex, is fascinated by science fiction, and inspired by urban subcultures. Her work remains big, bold, and uncompromising, as does her personal style. With her two-tone hair, relentlessly black clothes, brightly colored shoes and signature donut bangles, Cohn is instantly recognizable to those in the know. Even those who don't know who she is can tell she is somebody. As a jeweler Susan Cohn is acutely aware of the power of body adornment to project identity.

However, once removed from the body jewelry loses its context and much of its power; it is not easy to display. Within the cool white space of the gallery the jewelry in "Techno Craft" is placed in vitrines. This lends the work a well-deserved dignity and institutional stamp of approval but removes it from its bodily context. Divorced from the body's movement, the warmth of skin, and social interaction, jewelry runs the risk of becoming at best small sculpture and at worst irrelevant. The exhibition solves this problem through the use of large photographs of the work being worn. These life-size images stand in for absent people, placing the work back on the body. This is a deliberate strategy, for according to Cohn, "it is too easy to get caught up in the nature of the object itself and forget that the fundamental purpose of jewelry is to be worn."

Cohn is intensely interested in what people are actually wearing. Taking her cue from the city streets around her, Cohn refuses to limit her conception of body adornment to traditional jewelry forms. For her late 1980s series "and does it work?" Cohn observed people and their equipment—white collar drones commuting to work clutching brief cases and cell phones, security guards and cycle couriers sporting headsets and microphones, skate punks with walkman head phones like permanent implants—and then she transformed these items. The arms of glasses become *spectacle pins* protruding from pockets, conferring an instant intellectual look even on those with 20/20 vision. Her *security tag* allows anyone "access to all areas" and her *walkman 1* and *walkman 2* look street smart and convincing but are utterly incapable of producing sound. Cohn took these everyday items and removed their former function to transform them into jewelry. She distilled their meaning and allowed us to see them for what they really are, wearable symbols of identity and group membership.

Like many of her contemporaries, Cohn has challenged conventional notions of preciousness. Her 1994 installation *Way Past Real*, recreated in "Techno Craft," presents 153 of Cohn's donut bangles in a grid formation. They all appear to be gold and are seemingly identical. But only one is pure gold and only one is handmade by the artist. Cohn examines and questions preconceptions of value and authenticity. She embraces the use of industrial processes and the production of multiples, her signature is the donut shape in anodized aluminum. But while many jewelers have used non-precious materials in an attempt to subvert jewelry's traditional role as a visible marker of status, wealth and power, Cohn seems to have realized that this role is inevitable. She embraces the fact that jewelry, like all body adornment, is a public display. The wearability of her jewelry is central to Cohn's practice, not just in terms of practicality or comfort, but in terms of its ability to be visible as a form of social communication. She is convinced that this communication is vital and is determined that jewelry should remain dynamic. As the term "Techno Craft" implies, Susan Cohn is looking toward the future, eager to expand the possibilities of body adornment well into the twenty-first century.

Tracey Clement, a writer, jeweler, and artist, lectures at The College of Fine Arts and the Design Center in Sydney, Australia.

clockwise from left
Microphone Brooch, 1989
anodized and dyed aluminum, gold, rubber
4 7/8 x 2 x 1 3/8"
Photo: National Gallery of Australia Imaging

Gold Security Pass, 1989
anodized and dyed aluminum, yellow gold, rubber
6 1/8 x 2 1/4 x 1"
Photo: National Gallery of Australia Imaging

Way Past Real (detail), 1994
brass, gold plate, gold leaf, gold dust, anodized and natural aluminum, paint
bracelets each 5 1/8" diam.
Photo: John Gollings

"CHESS: CHESSMEN BY INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS"

VELVET DA VINCI GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO
MAY 1–31, 2003

VENNEL GALLERY, IRVINE, SCOTLAND
JUNE 28–JULY 28, 2003

THE GALLERY, RUTHIN CRAFT CENTRE, DENBIGHSHIRE, WALES
NOVEMBER 15, 2003–JANUARY 4, 2004

CRAFTS COUNCIL SHOP, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON
FEBRUARY 4–MARCH 13, 2004

JOHN MICHAEL KOHLER ARTS CENTER, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN
APRIL 26-AUGUST 1, 2004

THOMAS MANN I/O GALLERY, NEW ORLEANS
OCTOBER 2–NOVEMBER 15, 2004

by JENNIFER CROSS GANS

What does it take to turn chess pieces into works of art, like, for example, the utilitarian teapot of yesteryear? British sculptor Tom Hill, a San Francisco transplant, took on the challenge, collaborating on this show with Mike Holmes and Elizabeth Shypertt at the Velvet da Vinci Gallery. Over 90 artists from 10 different countries were invited to submit one or more pieces, which only had to be identifiable (e.g. as pawn, king, etc.) and meet size restrictions (minimum height 4 cm and maximum height ranging from 4 to 10.5 cm depending on the chess piece).

For obvious reasons, it was impractical to ask the artists to produce complete sets. However, inspiration struck Marjorie Schick, who crafted a dazzling (though unplayable) set, *Deception*, in striped wood, paint, and laminate. Abrasha offered a set in stainless steel and silicon bronze, which was less spectacular but more playable, and used the negative space between the pieces to make reverse images. Thomas Mann produced various pieces in different materials, Katy Hackney made a pair of pawns, queens and kings, and several other artists created pairs or multiples, particularly pawns.

It is perhaps old-fashioned to raise the question of whether craft-as-art needs to be functional. Many people don't expect studio art teapots to dispense tea, and chess pieces are far more complex because of their game function. In practical terms, they should be easily identifiable, not just horizontally but from the downward angle of a player looking at the board. They must have a clear and consistent relationship with each other, and not distract the players' moves. They must not be so fragile or precious that they can't be comfortably handled, or occasionally dropped.

Rightly or wrongly, the show's creators made no such demands on the artists, leaving them free to let their creativity roam over the *zeitgeist* of the game and the individual pieces. The result was a chaotic, wonderfully inspired, funny, often serious display of miniature sculptures, more or less evenly divided across the board, with pawns slightly in the lead. A number were traditionally recognizable, particularly the knights. Deborah Boskin offered a sterling silver *Bean Bag Knight* tucked in a yellow vinyl bag, while other delightful horsey horses were designed by Patty Cokus, Adam Paxton, Tony Esola, Gregor Anderson and Duke Williams. Several rooks were fairytale architecture, including Susan Wood's and Sayumi Yokouchi's creeper-covered buildings, and Brooke Battles' flag-decked castle.

Kings and queens, of course, represent power: while several crowns were present, most artists chose more individual ways of expressing this. A few were overtly playful: several queens wore crinolines or pearls, and one went naked. Others reflected queenly character, notably Reina Mia Brill's unnerving *Two Faced queen*, straight out of *Alice in Wonderland*. A few artists portrayed togetherness, pairing royal couples in different media.

Pawns are more complex and versatile pieces—mobile, initially vulnerable, but capable of morphing up to the highest level. Some artists featured mobility, producing mini-industrial or military designs, including a rig on wheels. Other pieces either grew and unfolded to become rook, knight, and queen, and some even had ingenious hidden mechanisms that lit up or vibrated at pawn to queen. Pawns' vulnerability was suggested by Bruce Metcalf's hearts, while Christina Miller produced the show's most overt political statement—eight gravestone-shaped pieces representing men she knew who could have been killed in combat.

Bishops brought out sly humor—with digs at the traditional ecclesiastical hierarchy and symbolism. Tom Hill carved some wooden pelicans "in their piety," complete with young. Andy Cooperman created two intricate, multi-media, contemporary reliquaries, while Marilyn da Silva offered two sterling silver *Well Seasoned Bishops*, which doubled as salt and peppershakers. Not surprisingly, there was a sprinkling of crosses, hats, and church architecture.

Several artists used environmental themes in their pieces. There were "pawn cones," a tropical plant, a sea horse, a jolly sea monster, and even a prickly pawn sprouting fish spines. Other designs were abstract, some more or less recognizable, others exercises in pure form or whimsy. Lurking amid the fun and games were true minature masterpieces of metalwork. In addition to the work of Tom Mann, Andy Cooperman, and Susan Wood, outstanding pieces were Heidi Nahser's queen, a miniature palazzo in sterling silver, 18k gold and stones, and Curtis Arima's *Queen of Carrots: Queen Anne's Lace* in silver and diamonds.

This show offered a refreshing look at a venerable game, with works light years away from traditional sets, modern kitsch in Mexican onyx, or pewter "Dungeons and Dragons." Hopefully, it will inspire other artists to try their hand at chess design: maybe some will even be chess *aficionados*.

An exhibition catalogue is available from the gallery.

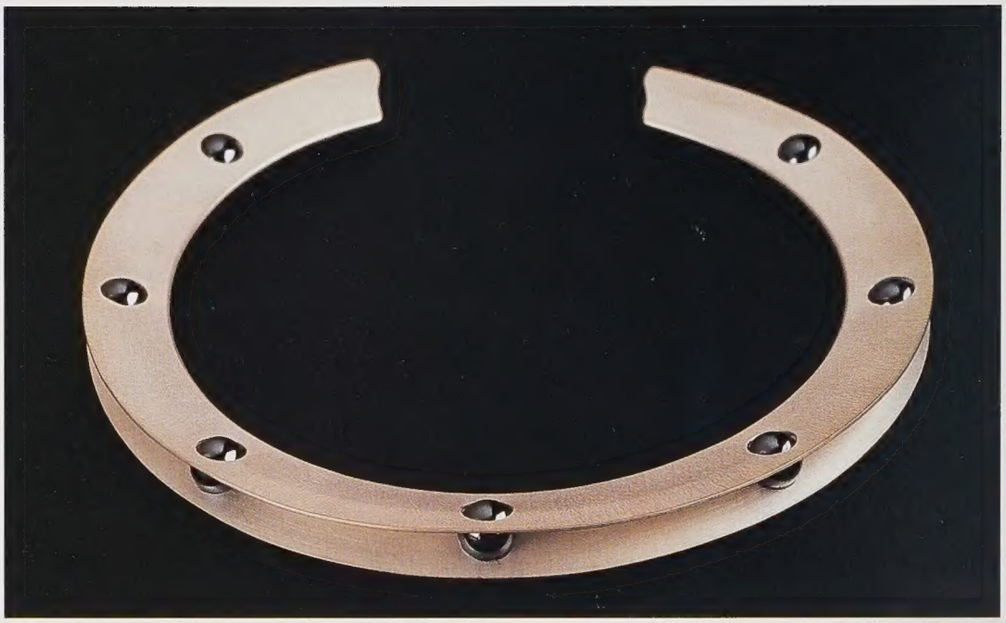
Jennifer Cross Gans is a studio artist and freelance writer living in San Francisco.

clockwise from top left
Tom Hill
Bishops, 2002
wood, brass and paint

Dawn Nakanishi
Pawn Cones, 2002
sterling silver, bronze

Deborah Boskin
Bean Bag Knight, 2002
sterling silver, yellow vinyl

Andy Cooperman
Rosemary's Bishop, 2002
22k gold/sterling bimetal, sterling, bronze, shibuichi, 18k, delrin



"DIETER NOWAK"

PRATT FINE ARTS CENTER, SEATTLE
APRIL 1-20, 2003

by MATTHEW KANGAS

Narrative is rejected as superfluous and trivial in the necklaces of Dieter Nowak. Of a different generation—the one that experienced World War II in Germany—Nowak's art is a deliberate escape into materials, form, and nature. Any references to natural shapes—leaves, almonds, kernels, seashells—are hardened by their metallic presentation. Thus, for the native of Koblenz, Germany, the selection of works from 1997 to the present suggests a careful but increasingly masterful manipulation of sterling silver, gold, black sulfur patina, glass, copper wire, and rubber into neck ornaments that complement (and compliment) the wearer rather than turn him or her into a postmodern plinth for the agony of personal politics.

Nowak's solo debut at Pratt Fine Arts Center was all the more impressive for its sense of each work being individually conceived though sharing common materials. From the simplest shapes to more complex geometric configurations, the artist's strong, assured sense of design is evident. An importer and retailer of European modernist furniture for 16 years, Nowak has attained an aesthetic that is fully in the vein of the Bauhaus, but with an American twist of stately informality, casual but confident.

The more than 20 works on view include mostly necklaces, but also some pins and earrings. The necklaces were paramount, however—each with a chosen modular link of differing shape. In one, curving, irregular S-shapes of silver and gold fit together to create a seemingly random wave pattern around the neck.

More typical are the orderly yet graceful pieces such as *Septet* and *Kokon* (both 2001). In the latter, flat pieces of sterling silver are folded over into bulging almond shapes seamlessly connected at each end. The simple matte finish reinforces the exciting sense of a cocoon awaiting transformation. In *Septet*, each of the seven elongated ovals has a distinct set of perforations or single cuts. Though sharing the stretched-out almond shape, the links do not bulge but, rather, come to a crisp upper crease. Josef Albers's "Homage to the Square" series is one possible formal analogy for this, and other, works.

Octet (2003) is a more complicated version of *Septet*, wherein multiple folds and creases within the modular links render each element unique yet retentive of a "family relationship" with the other works. More ingenious but still restrained, the flat silver sheets in *Octet* are curved and faintly flared like flowers about to bloom.

An early work, *Flux* (1997), combines fine silver and copper wire inside blown glass "pasta" tube shapes, with black neoprene rubber as a linking chain. Jewelry using glass is gaining great attention and Nowak's contribution could bear further elaboration.

Trabant (2001) and *Helios* (2003) treat a common format—the ring—with considerable variation. Each of the 10 rings connected by a single silver wire has a unique perforation extending from the center to the outer edges. In *Trabant*, the black sulfur staining is coupled with punch-outs that are amusingly machine-like in appearance; they suggest the outline of a hexagonal bolt. Nature seems subordinated here to the residual appearances of the worktable. As for *Helios*, striped gold and silver circles surround the empty interior of each ring shape. More ceremonial and quietly spectacular, the necklace reverts to a formal symmetry, but one enriched by the *kumboo* or applied Korean gold technique.

Laurus (2003) and *Black Moon* (2002) are the most irregular and unusual within the grouping. They respectively illustrate the importance of the artist's natural references and the possibility of a new direction: a stricter, quasi-machined appearance that bodes well for future development. In *Laurus*, thin, black, curled leaf shapes are touched with gold. Spiky and sleek, the individual elements alternately lie down and threateningly jut outward from the wearer's neck. With *Black Moon*, a single two-level ring of silver encloses the neck without a concluding clasp. In between the parallel silver layers, seven pressure-set black hematite stones are placed at even intervals, protruding through openings on the upper and lower levels.

This was a promising debut for a 68-year-old "emerging artist," one that should be followed by further refinements and the same mixture of intuitive shapes and methodical positioning.

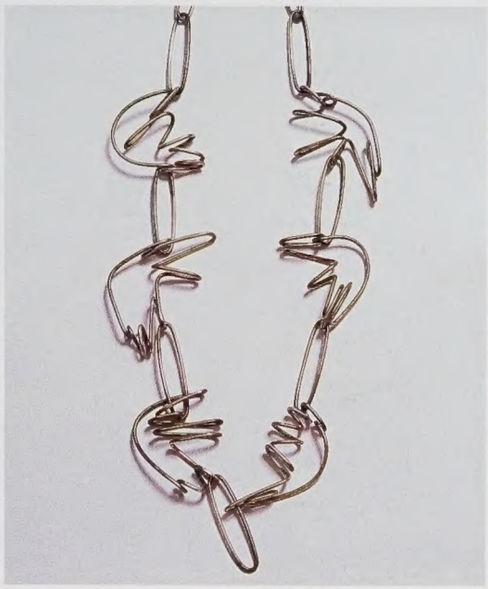
Matthew Kangas is a Seattle-based writer. His latest book, *Robert Willson: Image-maker* was a nominee for the Washington State Book Awards.

clockwise from left
Helios, 2003
sterling silver, *kumboo*
diameter 6 1/4"

Black Moon, 2002
hematite, sterling silver
diameter 6"

Laurus, 2003
sterling silver, *kumboo* and sulfur patina
diameter 6 1/4"

Photos: Roger Schreiber



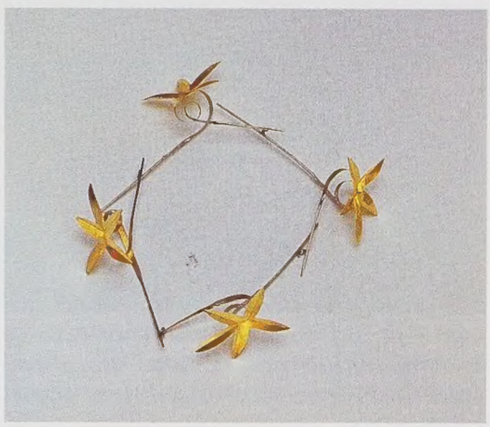
"DOROTHEA PRÜHL AND ANDREA WIPPERMANN, TWO WOMEN/DIFFERENT GENERATIONS/VARYING VIEWS/SAME ROOTS: BURG GIEBICHENSTEIN-UNIVERSITY OF ART AND DESIGN, HALLE"

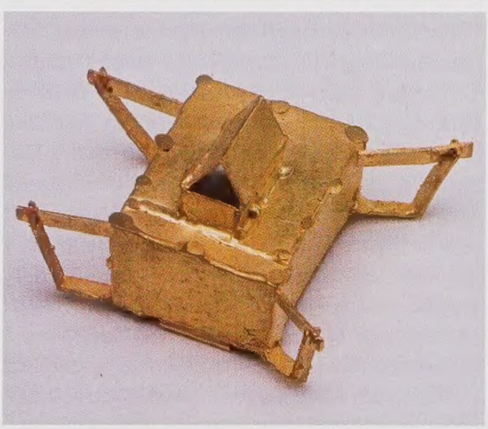
JEWELERS' WERK GALERIE,
WASHINGTON, D.C.
JUNE 5-27, 2003

by TACEY A. ROSOLOWSKI

Jewelers' Werk's displays have one impact at a large craft and design show such as SOFA, where the visitor is surrounded by an ethos of fine craftsmanship. Their effect is very different after one has passed by shops full of mass-produced objects en route to the gallery's home base in a mall in Washington, D.C. In June, the contrast between bland commodities and vital, experimental forms was all the more striking, thanks to an exhibition of jewelry by Dorothea Prühl and Andrea Wippermann—the influential teacher and her former student—from the School for Art and Design at Halle, Germany. Halle is a creative haven, as the late jeweler Onno Boekhoudt noted, with many "impressively energetic people (...above all women) ... concerned to preserve intellectual values." Exemplary products of this environment, the work of both Prühl and Wippermann communicates rigor and experimental panache.

Ten pieces by Dorothea Prühl (a Halle faculty member from 1972 to 2002) were on display. Working within a protected academic environment, the artist has produced only 70 pieces during her career, taking as long as two years to distill a single design idea to its essence. The five titanium shards of *Tiere* (Animals) slice the air, a striking contrast to the serenity of *Drei* (Three), which suspends five-inch long silver ovals in perfect balance. Prühl often conjures symmetry from randomness and extracts a formal statement from natural imagery. Her use of metal in a seemingly raw state is both matter-of-fact and compelling. A meandering gold line builds continuity across tangles of dark titanium in *Baumtiere* (Tree Animals), while the elongated 'V'





of *Nadel* (Pine Needle) arrests the eye with a powerful sculptural presence. Prühl works fearlessly on an imposing scale. Her confidence insures that even her most sculptural pieces meld with the body, as if a natural affinity binds object to skin. *Weihnachtstiere* (Christmas Animals) is large, even harness-like, with its six iron rings, each four inches long. Yet it is a conforming, comforting weight and the wearer's hands inevitably clutch the handle-like cross-pieces on each element. The body knows that this neckpiece—like all of Prühl's work—is meant to be worn.

Andrea Wippermann exhibited two distinct groups of work. The larger (38 pieces) derives a design vocabulary from lost-wax processes. Her *Atico* (Attic) brooch is a construction-in-progress, with ragged edges and visible points of soldering. Wippermann works her wax as finely as possible, producing thin metal forms that she then cuts, partially destroys, and re-assembles to explore the border between finished and unfinished structure. The ring, *Treppe* (Staircase), ascends through rough steps and stone-encrusted mezzanines while *Wrack* (Wreck) breaks open cast forms and explicitly demonstrates Wippermann's strategy of integrating negative space and internal construction into overall design. Such objects might be instruments, containers, or buildings. Each hovers between the processes of growth and decay at work in nature and human spaces alike. *Hasen in der Stadt* (Hares in the City) sends carved coral rabbits parading intently across a town square, creating another arena where nature and culture intersect.

Such work invokes the image of a jeweler seeking ever-smaller details to expand the expressive range of pendants, rings, or brooches. Wippermann's second group of (eight) objects arose from recent experiments with large forms and "moving metal." The large leaves of *Bätter* (Leaves) radiate energy and the cool yellow tones of gold 585 as they tremble on steel stems and coils. *Sonne* (Sun) is more subtle: the central choker stabilizes thin "rays" that extend over the shoulders. The end of each gold strip is folded into a weighty cube that sways seductively. The neckpiece's button closure adds a final elegant flourish. This is a compelling distillation of natural impression into formal gesture.

Craft techniques and creative strategies are transmitted through mentorship. Once teacher and student, Prühl and Wippermann are now peers (and friends) and this exhibition establishes a fascinating dialogue between their distinct, but equally uncompromising explorations of form. Their work also gives the American visitor an intimate brush with a European sensibility. Looking at and handling these pieces, one has no hint of jewelry norms self-consciously broken, whatever the scale or materials used. It is as if conventions for jewelry do not exist. These objects emerge from a simpler process wherein an artist confidently selects the proper scale and vocabulary for her expression.

Tacey A. Rosolowski, a writer who currently resides in Washington, D.C., was the 2003 James Renwick Fellow in American Craft.

clockwise from top left
Dorothea Prühl
Drei (Three), 2000
silver
length 11"
Photo: Helga Schulze-Brinkop

Dorothea Prühl
Füsche (Foxes), 2002
silver
length 19 1/2"
Photo: Nicolaus Brade

Andrea Wippermann
Blätter (Leaves) 2003
gold, steel
length 11 3/4"
Photo: Andrea Wippermann

Andrea Wippermann
Atico (Attic), 2002
gold
1 x 1 3/8 x 1 3/4"
Photo: Chris Sandig

"SILVER SPEAKS: TRADITIONAL JEWELRY FROM THE MIDDLE EAST"

BEAD MUSEUM, WASHINGTON, D.C.
OCTOBER 27, 2002-SEPTEMBER 21, 2003

by TONI GREENBAUM

Given the current tension between the Muslim world and the West, it is more important than ever to find some vehicle for mutual understanding. Jewelry, the universal messenger, may be just such a medium. Marjorie Ransom, who, with her husband, David, was an American diplomat and served in the Middle East for more than 30 years, has advanced this mission by placing part of her superb collection of Middle Eastern jewelry on public view. The Ransoms were posted to San'a, Yemen; Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Damascus, Syria; and Cairo, Egypt. Throughout her career, Marjorie collected traditional silver folk jewelry, buying her first piece in Damascus in 1960, while a graduate student in Middle Eastern studies at Columbia University. Her collection comprises more than 1000 pieces, of which 285 are exhibited at the Bead Museum in Washington, D.C.

The most impressive examples, both in scale and concept, are the extravagant bridal head ornaments and complex belts, however, all of the objects are well-chosen. The exhibition is comprehensive in its range, offering jewels rarely seen outside of museums in the Middle East, particularly those from Kurdish Northern Syria, Oman, and the Oasis of Siwa in Western Egypt. Jewelry is an integral part of all Middle Eastern societies. Worn by virtually all women, multiple necklaces, bracelets, anklets, and rings, along with belts and headpieces, enhance feminine allure, provide symbols of marital status, mark social rank, indicate wealth and serve as amulets or talismans.

One of the primary lessons of the exhibition, in fact, is its insight into the role of women in Middle Eastern societies—Muslim, Jewish and Christian alike. Each country and religion carries their own distinctive traditions concerning the making and wearing of jeweled ornaments. Forbidden to Muslim men by Qu'ranic dictates, Islamic law, and traditional prohibitions, for example, jewelry was worn almost exclusively by women. Sold by weight, jewelry was given to a bride at the time of her marriage by her husband, who purchased it with part of the dowry. This commodity made up a Muslim woman's personal wealth, redeemable (albeit by a male family member) in time of need. Bridal jewelry was never passed down from one generation to the next, but, instead, was sold at the *suq* (bazaar) after a woman's death. The jewelry was then melted down and recycled or sold in its original form to tourists. Most extant Islamic jewelry from the region, therefore, dates only from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Although the Qu'ran does not directly prohibit silversmithing (admonishing only the hoarding of gold and silver), and today three-quarters of working smiths are Muslim, most early jewelers belonged to other religious groups. In Syria, Armenian Christians, Greek Orthodox, and Jews dominated the craft; in Cairo, the artisans were Coptic Christians; Hindu Indians worked in Oman and Yemen. Jewelers enjoyed great respect within each society, as integral members of a nomadic Bedouin tribe, town/village merchants, or itinerant craftsmen. The vast majority of silversmiths in Kurdish Northern Syria and Yemen were Jewish, until the two great exoduses to Israel in 1947-1950 and 1967. Although the artisans, particularly in Yemen, made jewelry for both Muslim and Jewish women, the styles differed slightly, and women would occasionally wear one another's models for good luck or to ward off the evil eye.

The exhibition offers an informative technical section, displaying actual tools and rudimentary techniques such as forging, casting, embossing, repousée, filigree, granulation, and chain making. It also includes several photographs of artisans at work, as well as those of the jewelry being worn, to dazzling effect, en masse, by its owners. Native garments, displayed on mannequins, enrich the viewer's knowledge of Middle Eastern costume and further enhance one's understanding of the close relationship between the textiles and jewelry of the region.

The Middle East is changing so quickly that it is essential to study its traditions while they still survive. The vast majority of its people now live in cities and prefer gold jewelry, made abroad, to silver folk jewelry. Nonetheless, no region has enjoyed such cultural amalgamation as the Middle East—where jewelry and folk tradition were melded so seamlessly and with such great pride. "Silver Speaks" is an apt title for this exhibition—no other "vocabulary" describes the Middle East as articulately as its silver jewelry.

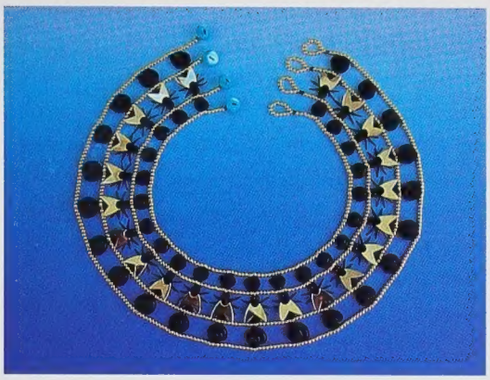
An exhibition catalogue is available from the museum.

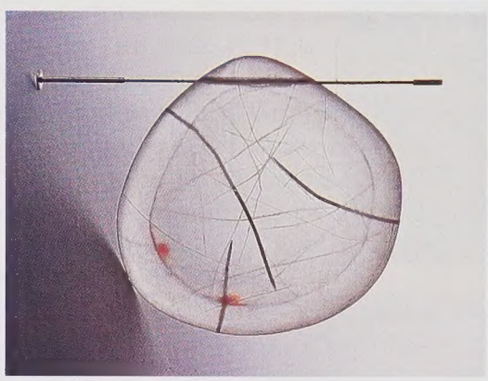
Toni Greenbaum is a New York-based art historian specializing in jewelry and metalwork.

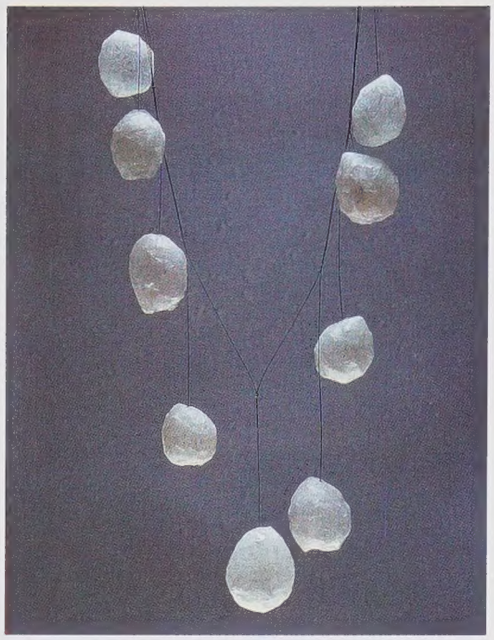
clockwise from left
Yemen (Jewish maker)
Hirz *Amulet Cases*
silver

Saudi Arabia
Bracelets and Anklet
silver, turquoise, glass

Yemen (Hadramaut)
Belt Buckle (detail of belt)
silver, glass







"JEWELRY HARD AND SOFT: PLASTIC, FIBER, GLASS"

SOCIETY OF ARTS & CRAFTS, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
FEBRUARY 8-APRIL 29, 2003

by PATRICIA HARRIS AND DAVID LYON

Confounding expectation seems to be the main theme of "Jewelry Hard and Soft," which serves more as an umbrella title for the exhibition than a challenge to address a tactile dialectic. Many of the featured artists work with ephemeral or industrial materials, a practice that always runs the risk of seeming "precious" (in the sense of "forced and artificial") instead of "precious" (in the sense of "having great value"). But by largely eschewing sentimentality, they stop short of falling off the precipice of silliness.

Sofia Calderwood, who admires the sensual strategies that flowers use to attract pollinators, creates rings and brooches that similarly call attention through shape, color, and scent (some "flowers" have a spot to place a dab of perfume), but she isn't pitching to mere posy-lovers. There's nothing of the childish daisy chain in her composite flower heads assembled from brightly colored synthetic rubber earplugs. The clever choice of materials gives the imagery a conscious edge.

Artist Jessica Davies challenges the concept of preciousness by marrying strips of rubber studs to sterling silver rings. Some strips encircle the ring, others fit inside. The contours are pleasing and unapologetically synthetic. By making the rubber integral to the structure, Davies capitalizes on the material's tactile qualities.

Emiko Oye's "Patent Pending Collection" is the most confrontational work in the exhibition. The flamboyant cuffs, *Showroom 007* and *Pioneer a Movement*, include sterling silver in their large catches, but what attracts attention are the recycled plastic ties normally used to affix price tags to clothing. On each tie, she attached a small, clear plastic tag imprinted with such commentary as "too futuristic," "who will buy," "nobody will wear," and "jewelry isn't art"—probably comments heard from prospective customers or fellow designers. But she pulls off the trash-to-treasure transformation, rendering the critics moot, or maybe even mute. "To reclaim the negative exchanges as empowering mantras enables us to move forward with our lives," she writes in her statement for the show.

Patty Cokus, on the other hand, seems more haunted by the ghosts of language than by the words themselves. Her *Haiku Choker* continues her exploration of jewelry constructed of hand-blown glass with inclusions, each piece linked like a bridge in a cage of sterling silver wire. In some of these pieces, she writes messages on small slips of paper and slides them down the blowpipe into the ampoule, where the paper turns to ash. The ampoules, in effect, serve as hermetic tabernacles for memories, thoughts, or emotions.

Of all the works in this exhibition, Felieke van der Leest's *Horse Fly Necklace* comes closest to addressing the tactile oppositions of hard and soft, in part by also juxtaposing representation with abstraction and industrial materials with gold. The necklace consists of concentric rings of figures presented in a frieze. Viewed from a distance, the contrast of black and gold establishes a lovely rhythm. Up close, the black figures emerge as life-size molded plastic horse flies and small coils suggestive of fecal deposits. The chevrons of sheet gold forming the fly wings bring both a preciousness and a formality to the potentially repulsive imagery.

Ultimately, some of the most striking works in "Jewelry Hard and Soft" defy expectation without seeming to try. Yoko Shimizu's pieces reveal a fascination with semi-transparency—what the eye can *almost* but not quite see. Embedding rice paper with a transparent resin, she fashioned egg-shaped brooches delicately ringed with silver wire. The flecks of fiber in the paper create a gauze-like veil; no matter how light plays on the forms, the interiors remain mysterious. Her necklace of these egg-shaped forms has both the abstraction of a sculptural mobile, and the organic specificity of kelp pods. While the egg shapes appear delicate and fragile, the resin makes them strikingly rigid and durable.

Marzia Rossi's pieces for this exhibition also play with the limits of transparency, as exemplified in one brooch. The body of the piece is a flat lump of Plexiglas pierced at the top by a sterling pin and shaft. Its front surface is as smooth and rounded as a beach stone. Subtle and quiet on the body, the brooch seems completely transparent. But it comes alive with internal striations and dabs of red glass when held to the light. The confounding of expectation lies in the transformation—like a beach pebble that only betrays its patterns when wet.

Patricia Harris and **David Lyon** are writers and critics based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

clockwise from top left
Emiko Oye
Showroon 007 and *Pioneer a Movement*, 1999
"The Patent Pending Collection Cuffs" Series
plastic, steel, rubber, sterling silver
3 x 4"

Yoko Shimizu
Necklace, 2002
rice paper, resin, nylon coated steel, silver
diameter 10 5/8"

Marzia Rossi
Brooch, 2002
Plexiglas, silver, red glass
diameter 2 3/4"

Felieke van der Leest
Horse Fly Necklace, 2002
18K gold, plastic, metal, silk
diameter 10"

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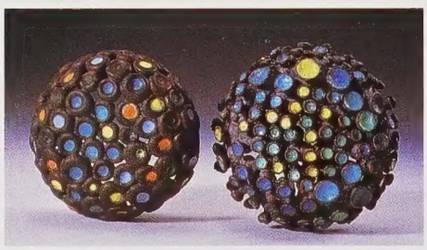
by Dana Singer

3M, Inc. Sponsors SNAG Conference

3M, Inc. will again be the official corporate sponsor of the SNAG annual conference, to be held in St. Petersburg, Florida, March 17-21, 2004. The conference is co-hosted by the Florida Society of Goldsmiths and the Florida Craftsmen. The theme of this year's conference is "In Pursuit of Passion," featuring Keynote Speaker Christiane Corbat and 14 presenters including Harlan Butt, Alan Revere, Deb Stoner, and Valentin Yotkov. The annual student slide show will again be coordinated by Linda Darty, of East Carolina University. The traditional Pin Swap opening night reception on March 17 will be "Green with Envy" in celebration of St. Patrick's Day, poolside at the Hilton among the palm trees.

SNAG Workshop Grants Awarded

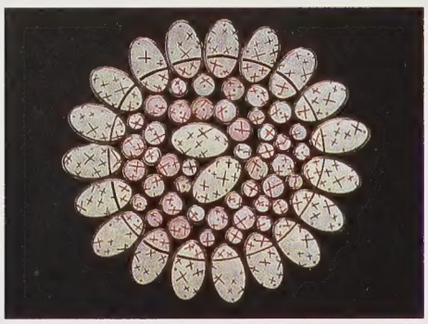
SNAG awarded four workshop grants in 2003. The Hawaiian Craftsman hosted Andy Cooperman teaching "Bench Tricks," the Metals Guild of Maryland sponsored Fred Fenster's "Pewtersmithing," the Wisconsin Designer Crafts Council featured Donald Friedlich teaching "Working With the Jewelry Industry: Processes Beyond Production," and Kirsten Skiles taught a workshop at the University of North Dakota on "Chasing & Repousse on Steel." These grants are awarded annually through competitive grant applications reviewed by different groups of professional jurors each year.



SNAG Awards Educational Endowment Scholarships

The Educational Endowment Scholarship is SNAG's highest award offered to students. The 2003 recipients were Derek Sober, Hye-Young Suh, and Sarah Turner. Derek Sober is an undergraduate student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, studying under Lynda LaRoche. Hye-Young Suh is a graduate student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, studying with Billie Jean Theide. Sarah Turner is a graduate student at Cranbrook Academy of Art, studying under Gary Griffin.

Two honorable mentions were also awarded by the jurors, to Natalya Pinchuk, graduate student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, also studying with Billie Jean Theide, and Brandy Cochrane, an undergraduate at the Oregon College of Art & Craft, studying under Christine Clark.



SNAG Awards Minority Student Grant

The SNAG Minority Student Grant is designed to encourage the continued contributions of racial and ethnic minorities in the metals field. The two 2003 awards went to Vanessa Mitchell, undergraduate student at the University of Michigan studying under Kevin Bowen, and Yi-Shin (Maggie) Lui, graduate student at Kent State University studying under Kathleen Browne.

top to bottom
SNAG Executive Director Dana Singer (center) with the Florida conference co-chairs, Gini Rollins of the Florida Society of Goldsmiths (left) and Michele Tuegel of Florida Craftsmen

Derek Sober
Space Cadet Tea-Set, 2002
nu gold
6 1/2 x 12 x 2 1/4"

Hye-Young Suh
*bge*9* (brooch), 2002
enamel on electroformed copper
1 1/2 x 3" diameter

Sarah Turner
All for One. . . (brooches and buckles), 2002
copper, enamel, sterling silver, steel
buckles: 3 x 2 x 1"; overall diameter 3/4"
Photo: Courtney Frisse

Vanessa Mitchell
African References, 2002
copper, brass
10 x 8 x 6"

Yi-Shin (Maggie) Lui
Heaven/Earth (Earth), 2002
copper, patina
11 1/2 x 11 1/2 x 3 1/2"

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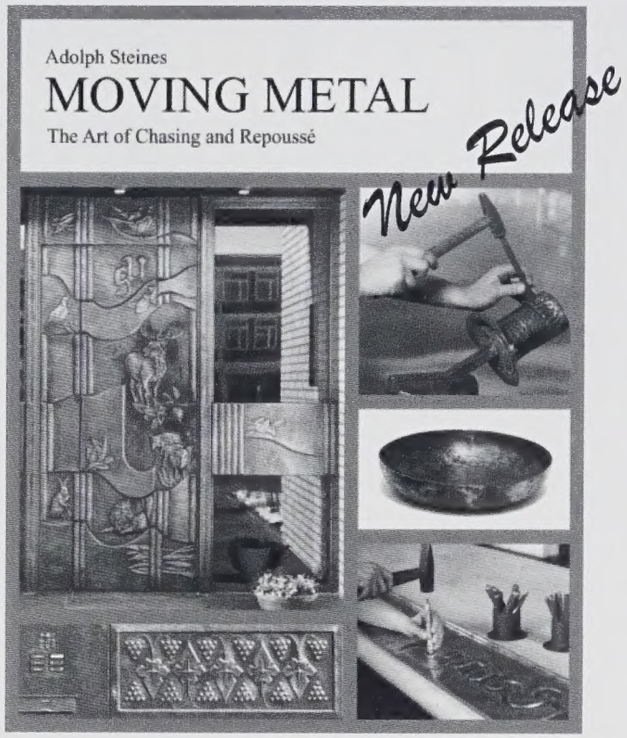

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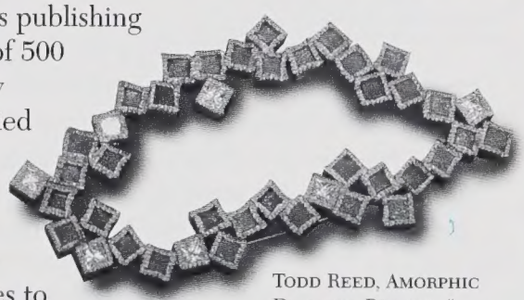

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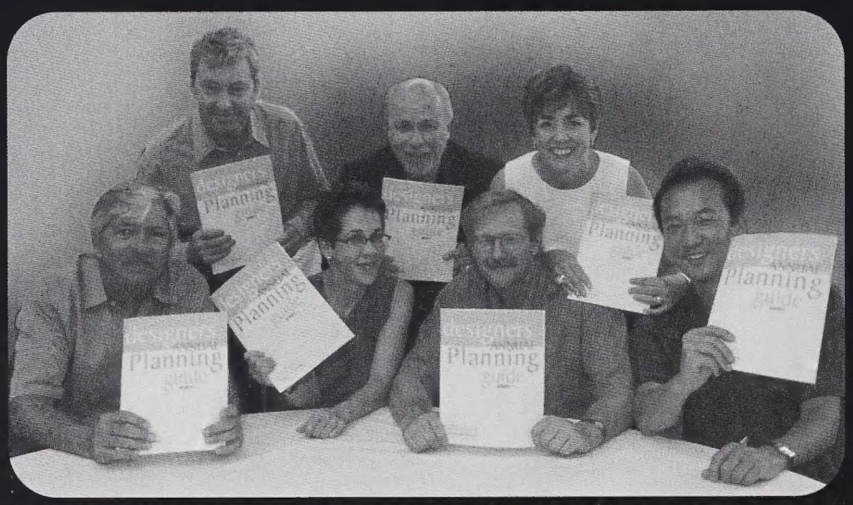

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opposite page, clockwise from top

Myra Mimlitsch-Gray
Cup with Oval, 1998
sterling silver
5 x 4 x 3"
Photo: Robert Storm

Biba Schutz
Ceremonial Pendant, 1998
copper, sterling, fine silver
4 3/4 x 1 1/4 x 1 1/2"
Photo: Ron Boszko

(Summer 2003 *Metalsmith*)
cover: Manfred Bischoff
Brothers (brooch), 2001
Courtesy Joseph Kosuth and
Cornelia Lauf, Rome

Helen Shirk
Sustaining Sprit XXVII, 2000
copper, patina, colored pencils
6 x 23 x 23"

Whitney Boin
Post Engagement Ring, 1996
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platinum, 18k
Photo: Todd Flashner

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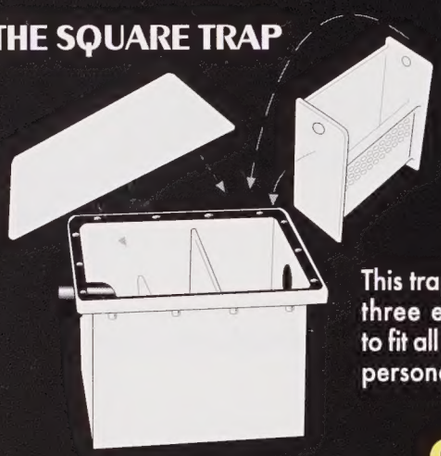

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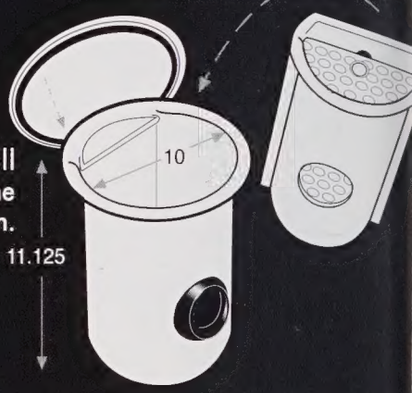

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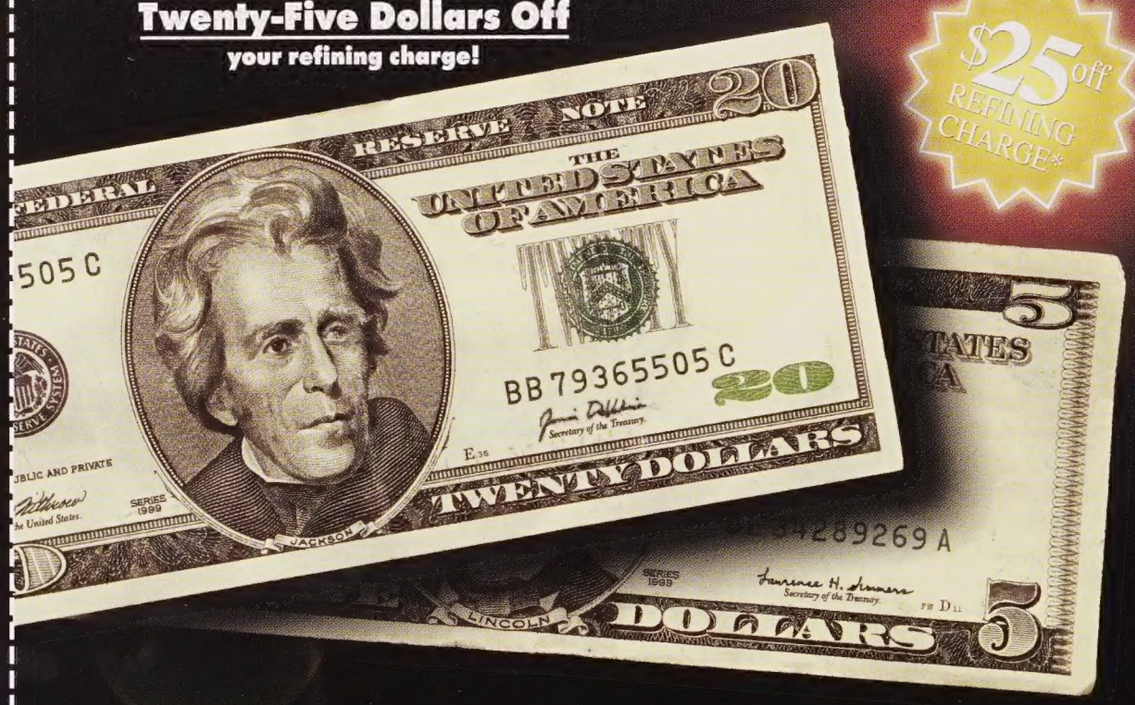

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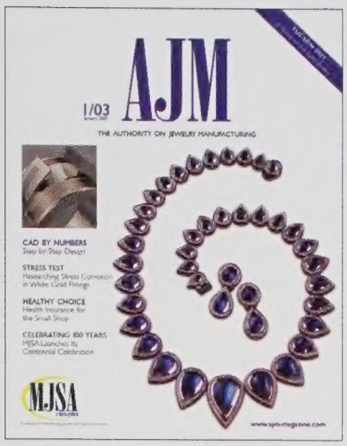

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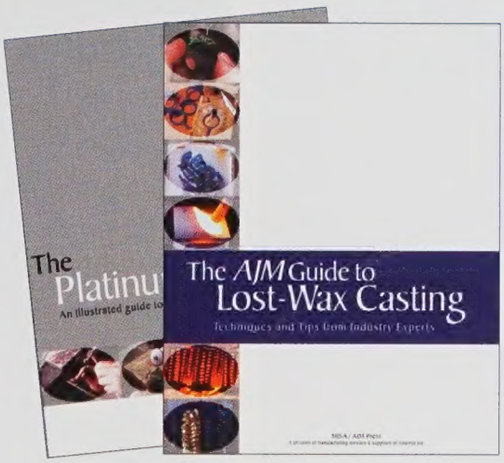

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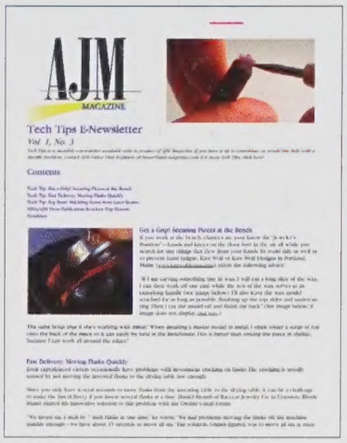

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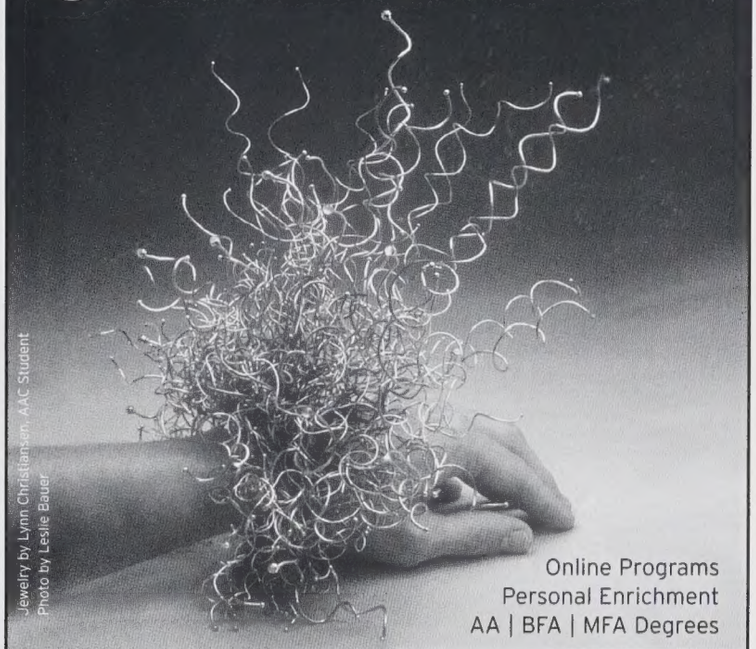

Jewelry by Lynn Christiansen, AAC Student
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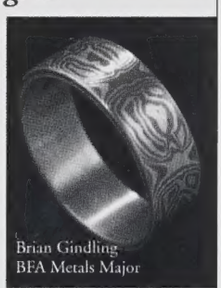

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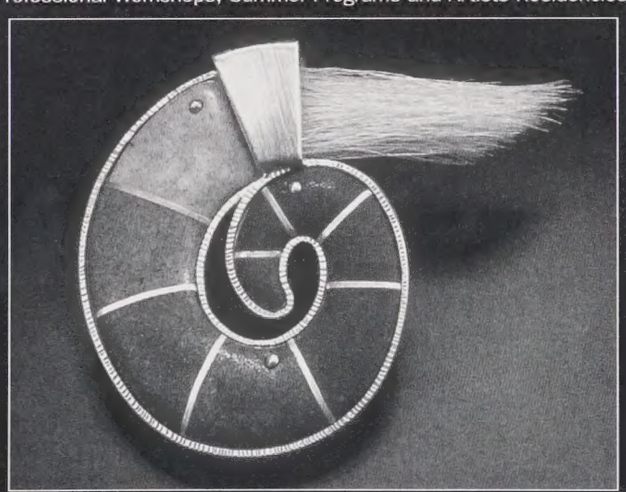

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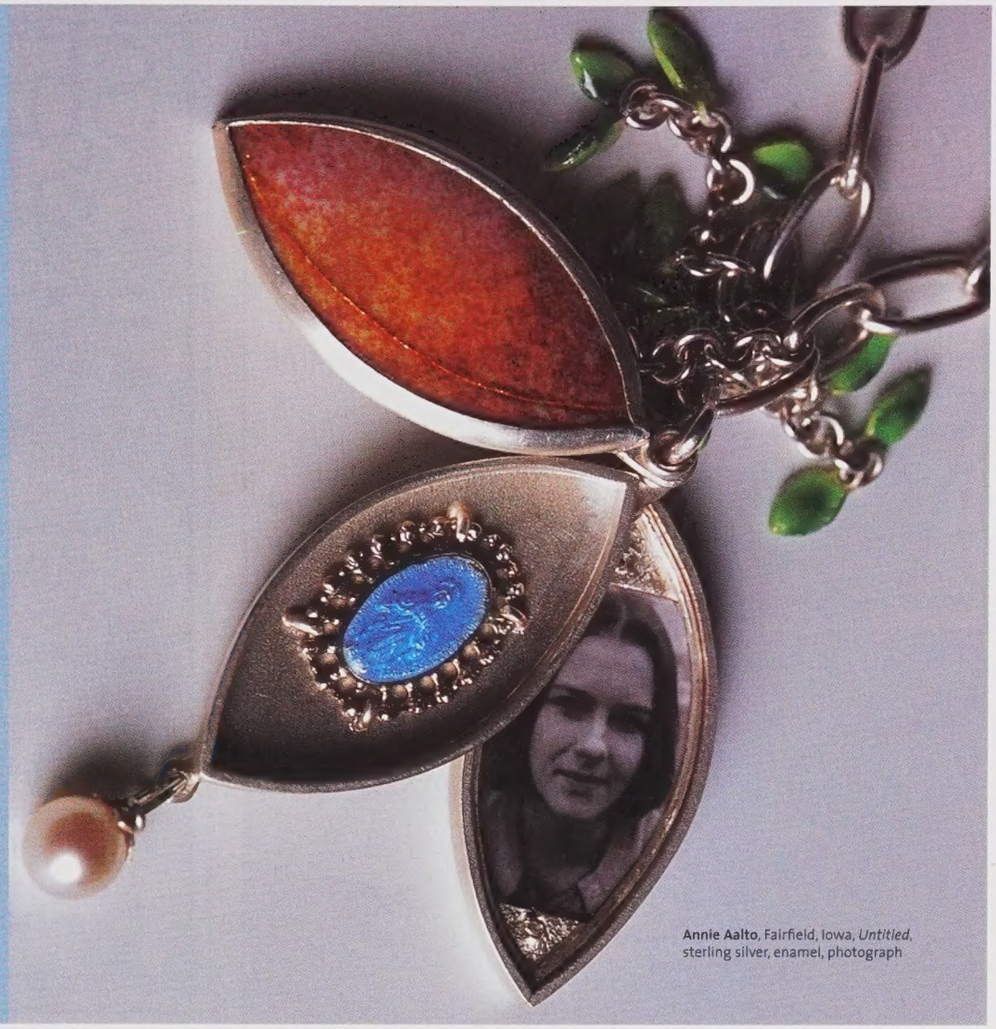

Annie Aalto, Fairfield, Iowa, *Untitled*, sterling silver, enamel, photograph

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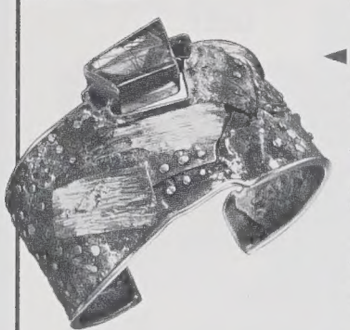

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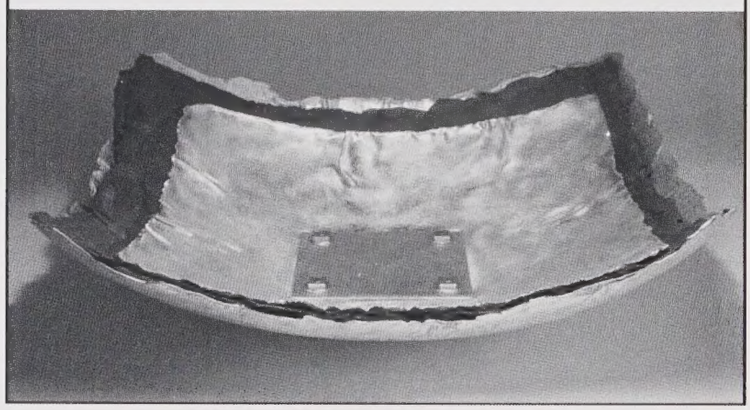

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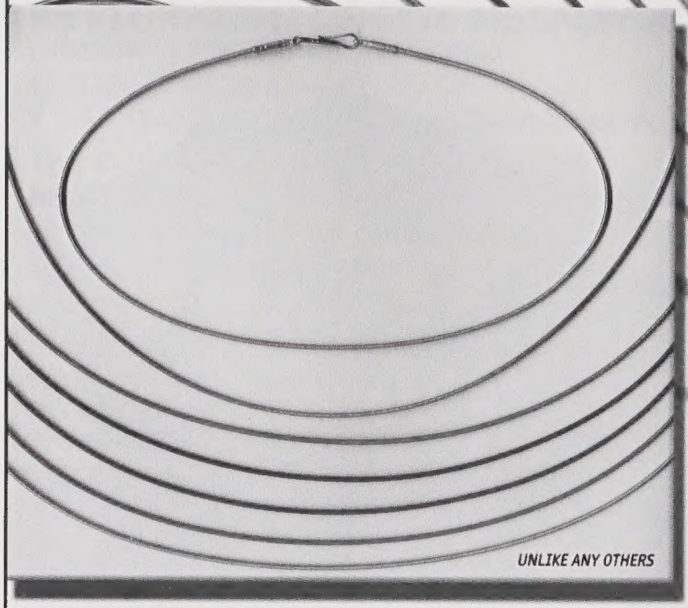

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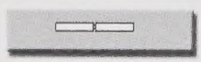
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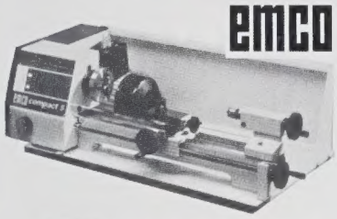

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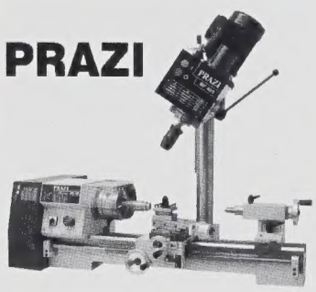

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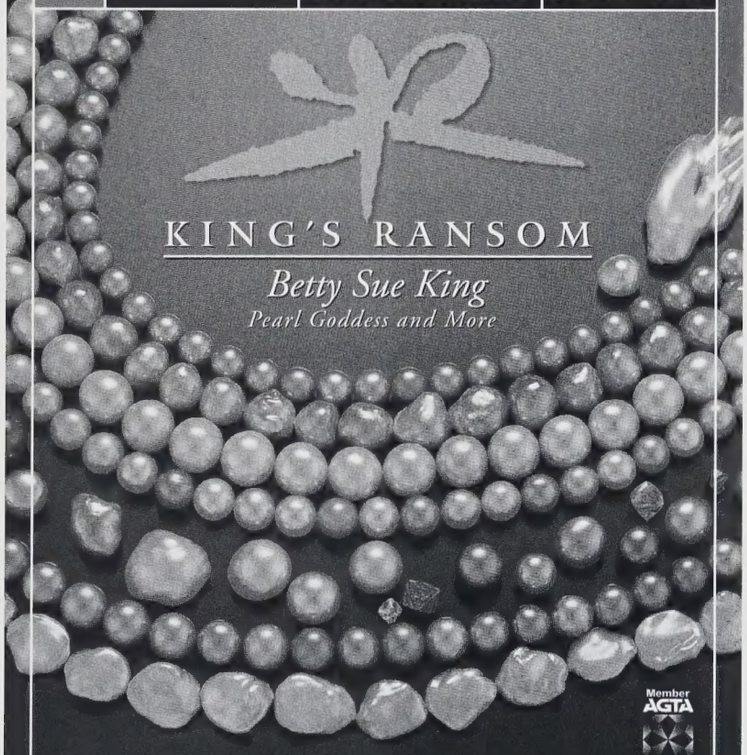

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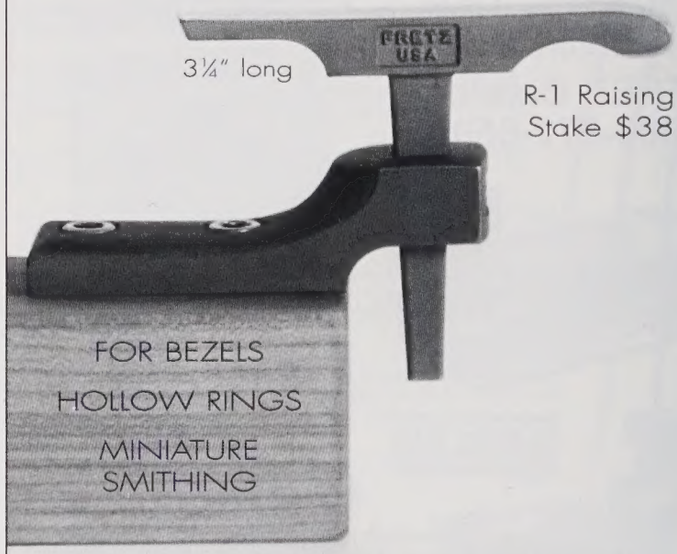

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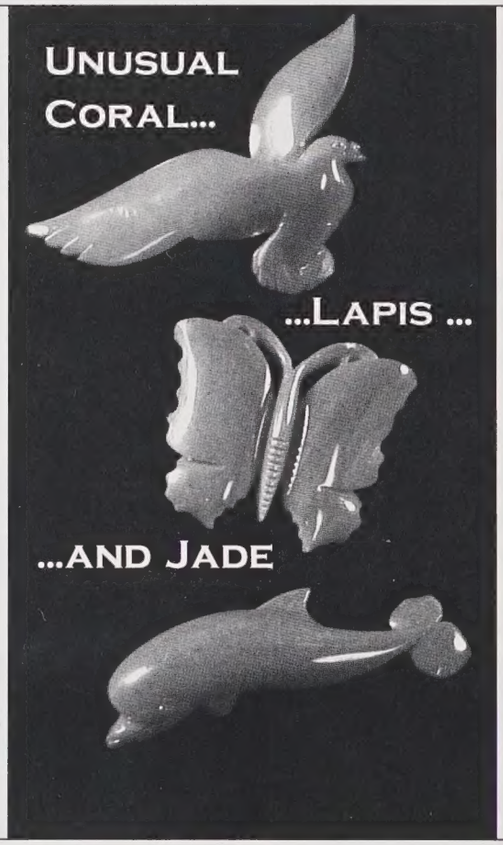

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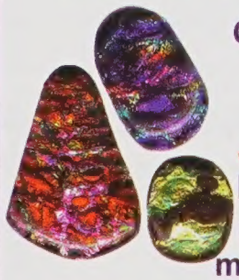

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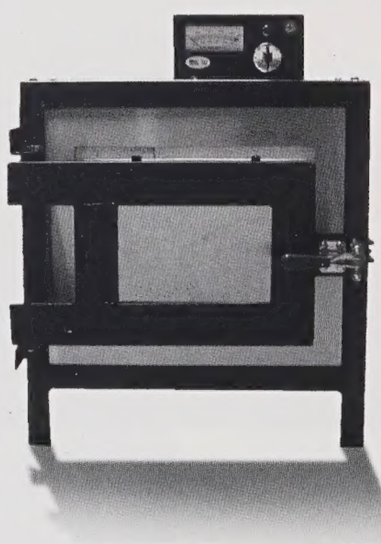

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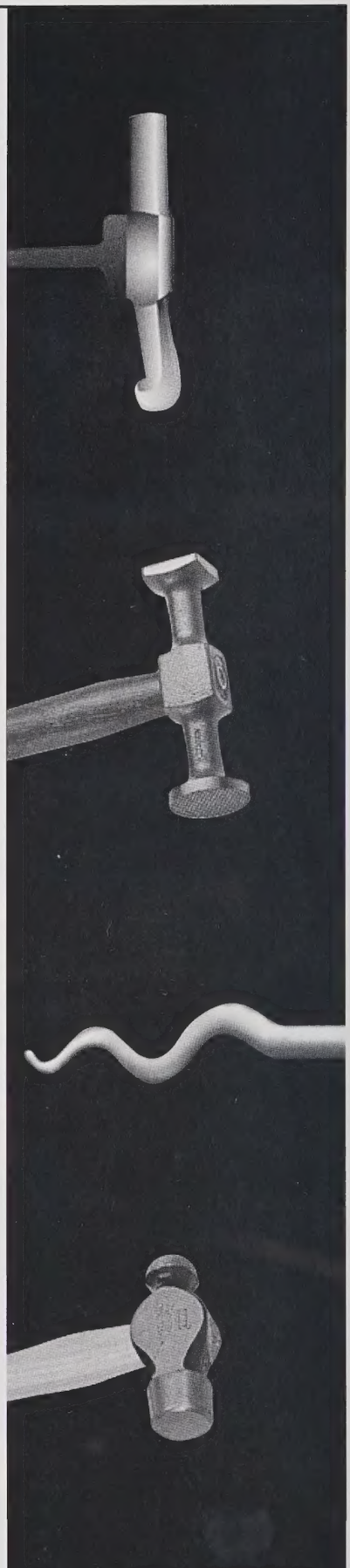

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